

THE PUNITIVE EXPEDITION INTO MEXICO, 1916:  
POLITICAL-MILITARY INSIGHTS

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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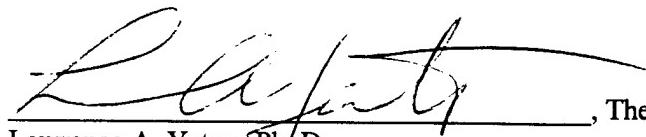
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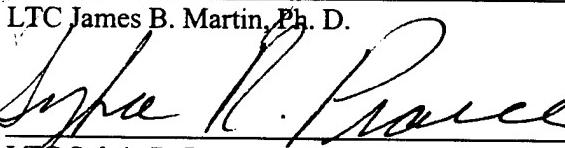
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## ABSTRACT

**THE PUNITIVE EXPEDITION INTO MEXICO, 1916: POLITICAL-MILITARY INSIGHTS**  
by MAJ Charles J. Dorsey, USA, 104 pages.

This study examines the political-military insights offered by the Punitive Expedition into Mexico, 10 March 1916 to 5 February 1917. This thesis uncovers these insights by examining how Major General Frederick Funston, commander of the United States Southern Department, and Brigadier General John J. Pershing, commander of the Punitive Expedition, in conjunction with the Department of War and the Department of State within the Wilson Administration, planned and conducted this nearly year-long campaign.

This study examines how Funston and Pershing planned and conducted a military campaign in a country with which the United States was not at war, as well as a campaign characterized by numerous restraints placed upon its operations by the Wilson Administration. As such, this study highlights several important insights into the nature of an operation in a restrictive environment, to include the importance of establishing clearly defined and achievable objectives, establishing and maintaining legitimacy, maintaining perseverance, establishing unity of effort, operating with restraint, and continuously maintaining security of friendly forces.

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## PREFACE

This study examines the political-military insights offered by the U.S. Punitive Expedition into Mexico, 10 March 1916 through 5 February 1917. Put together by the administration of President Woodrow Wilson in direct response to Francisco "Pancho" Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico, the expedition set out to capture Villa and his band of brigands. The War Department selected Brigadier General John J. Pershing to lead the expedition. Pershing, along with his force that grew to nearly 10,000 men, soon became embroiled in a dynamic military operation that unfolded in a country in the throes of an immense social upheaval known as the Mexican Revolution.

This study will examine how Pershing and his immediate superior, Major General Frederick Funston, commander of the U.S. Southern Department, planned and conducted this campaign in accordance with guidance provided by the Wilson Administration. The political and diplomatic dimensions of the expedition created an environment characterized by numerous restrictions on the use of military force and on the overall conduct of the military operation. How the military commanders operated in this environment is the primary focus of this thesis. It will examine how political conditions, both within the United States and Mexico, as well as diplomatic relations between the two countries, greatly determined the characteristics of the military operation on the ground.

Several key issues will be discussed within the context of this political-military operation. These issues include an examination of the goals and objectives of the expedition, how American military commanders expected to establish and maintain what today would be called the

"legitimacy" of the operation and the maintenance of unity of effort. Additional key issues for discussion will include how the military commanders operated in an environment characterized by numerous restrictions on the use of force and how they continually adapted the tactical operations of the expedition to the ever-changing situation on the ground. Finally, this study will examine how the military commanders maintained security of American forces operating in an often hostile environment where the lines between friendly and enemy forces were not always clearly defined.

Why is a study of the Punitive Expedition important? This was a military operation conducted within the borders of a nation with which the United States was not at war and with which it purported to have friendly relations. Though the primary focus of the United States Army has been, and will remain, on fighting and winning wars on the traditional conventional battlefield, it has, throughout its history, often found itself conducting operations short of general war in a more restrictive environment. As the twenty-first century approaches, it is certain that the Army will continue to find itself operating in these more restrictive environments. The Punitive Expedition offers several historical insights into the conduct of such an operation.

A chronological approach is taken in examining the expedition, beginning with an overview of U.S.-Mexican relations along the border, the Mexican Revolution, and the events that led to Villa's raid on Columbus. The Punitive Expedition will then be discussed as it progressed through several phases, beginning with its initial entry into Mexico, proceeding through active operations in pursuit of Villa, followed by the expedition's consolidation and policing of districts, and ending with its withdrawal. This study ends with a chapter on analysis and conclusions.

A number of sources were used in preparing this study. The background chapter, along with the general movements of the expedition in Mexico, relies on secondary sources, most notably John S. D. Eisenhower's Intervention!, Clarence Clendenen's Blood on the Border, and Frank Tompkins's Chasing Villa. Tompkins, a central participant and U.S. Army major during

the Punitive Expedition, wrote a detailed account of the campaign. Most other authors on the subject, including Eisenhower, rely heavily on Tompkins's study.

The bulk of the information comprising the political, military, and diplomatic events surrounding the campaign was pieced together using several first-hand sources, most notably Arthur S. Link's The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, the State Department's Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916, and Pershing's own official report of the expedition. The Wilson papers included hundreds of telegrams, messages, and letters circulated among Wilson, his cabinet secretaries, the Army Chief of Staff General Scott, General Funston, and General Pershing. The numerous telegrams and messages in Foreign Relations were used to research the diplomatic front. Pershing's official report, over one-hundred pages long, also includes several reports from his subordinate commanders relating specific actions on the ground in Mexico. Finally, a number of books and articles were used to research points of the campaign not addressed in detail in this study, including such topics as air operations and motor transport functions.

For those who wish to proceed with further study on the Punitive Expedition the following suggestions are offered. Economic considerations are not addressed in any great detail in this study, and there is considerable evidence suggesting a link between American business interests and newspaper magnates with the overall goals and objectives of this campaign. Most importantly, there is no discussion of the German issue by examining the importance and degree of German involvement in Mexico during the period, and how that involvement conflicted with American interests and military operations. Also addressed only minimally are the logistical and communications support during this operation, and of course, there is always room for expanding on the political, military, and diplomatic relations regarding the campaign.

In closing, I would like to thank several individuals without whose assistance this study would not have been possible. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Lawrence A. Yates from the Combat

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## CHAPTER 1

### SETTING THE STAGE

The roots of the U.S. Punitive Expedition into Mexico in 1916 lie in the existence of an often hostile common border and in the events of the Mexican Revolution. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century, a series of small-scale U.S. military operations occurred along the border, directed against Mexican irregulars, Indian marauders, black marketeers, and raiders.<sup>1</sup> During a significant portion of this period, Porfirio Díaz ruled Mexico. Initially beneficial to Mexico, the Díaz regime became progressively more authoritarian and alienated from the people.<sup>2</sup> He was overthrown in 1911 at the beginning of the Mexican Revolution. In the upheaval that followed, the stage was set for a dramatic series of events leading up to the Punitive Expedition.

U.S. relations with Mexico had generally been uneasy. In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the U.S.-Mexican War, gave the United States a vast new territory previously governed by Mexico and established a common border on a general line of the Rio Grande and Gila Rivers. The Gadsden Purchase of 1853 completed the boundary as it was known in 1916, and as it stands today. Between 1853 and 1910, military operations along the border were governed by an agreement between Mexico and the United States that allowed either country to pursue hot trails of bandits and marauders into the other's territory.<sup>3</sup> On some occasions, these operations amounted to more than short-term pursuits. Rival Mexican factions fought a small engagement on U.S. soil during Porfirio Díaz's rise to power in 1877, and in 1883, the United States invaded the northern Mexican state of Sonora under Brigadier General George Crook to

campaign against Apache Indians in the Sierra Madre Mountains. Tensions along the border increased after 1910, as events of the Mexican Revolution unfolded and became increasingly violent. The United States responded in 1911 by conducting a division-level training exercise along the border for the first time. With the fall of Díaz in the same year, the agreement governing the pursuit of hot trails expired.<sup>4</sup>

As the nation's longest reigning executive, assuming the Presidency in 1877, Porfirio Díaz had ruled Mexico almost continually for thirty-three years. In the 1880s, he had centralized his authority and had begun to strengthen Mexico's infrastructure, economy, and standing in the world by opening the country to foreign investors and speculators.<sup>5</sup> As modernization progressed, it required more and more foreign capital, and the Díaz regime increasingly catered to the interests of rich and powerful foreign developers. One of the largest foreign investors in Mexico was the United States. By 1910, the United States had purchased seventy-five percent of Mexican exports and owned seventy-five percent of the mines and fifty percent of the oil fields in the country.<sup>6</sup> Nearly one-fourth of American investment occurred in the three northern Mexican states of Sonora, Chihuahua, and Coahuila<sup>7</sup> (see fig. 1) where U.S. dollars facilitated the development of railroad infrastructure, mining operations, and cattle ranching. The improved economic situation helped sustain a growing middle class and stimulated its ambitions for greater political power at the expense of the dictatorship. Díaz's attempts at greater federal control of the area, along with his support of its more conservative rich and powerful interests, helped to fuel the growing unpopularity of his government in the region. Northern Mexico thus became a breeding ground of discontent and revolt, even as Díaz made plans to retire from office in 1910, the centennial of Mexican independence.

Elections were scheduled for July 1910, and as the date approached, Díaz reversed his decision to retire and made plans to ensure his reelection. As the election grew nearer, large-scale

opposition to the President began to center around Francisco I. Madero, the son of a wealthy aristocratic landowner from Coahuila and a fervent believer in liberal government. Madero published a book calling for democratic reform, and he helped organize, and later became the presidential candidate for, a national democratic movement known as the Anti-reelectionist Party. Alarmed by the potential of this opposition, Díaz jailed Madero on the eve of the 1910 election and declared himself the winner.

Madero was released on bond shortly thereafter and sought refuge in Texas, where he declared himself the legitimate President of Mexico and plotted an armed revolt against Díaz. During the remainder of 1910 and the early months of 1911, several armed clashes ensued between Díaz's troops and Madero's rebels, culminating in the seizure of Ciudad Juárez by Madero's forces in May 1911. Díaz fled the country, and Madero assumed the role of head of state. In October 1911, Madero was elected President in what many believe to have been the most honest election in Mexican history.<sup>8</sup> The Mexican Revolution thus began as a movement for liberal political reform, a movement that came to power with a minimum cost of lives and property. But the demand for change did not end with Madero's election, and the revolution that ensued eventually consumed over one million lives in a country of fewer than twenty million people.<sup>9</sup>

Madero's government lasted only fifteen months. Though his term demonstrated respect for democratic institutions, it produced little dramatic change in such areas as land reform, education, and free speech. The new President proved to be a poor administrator in implementing reform, and his government was always on precarious ground due to the leniency he bestowed on many of his enemies and potential adversaries. The result was the alienation of those who desired more dramatic reforms, while those determined to restore a more authoritarian regime in the style of Porfirio Díaz were allowed to organize in opposition to the government.

Several anti-government uprisings occurred during Madero's short term in office, and in February 1913 a major revolt broke out in Mexico City in an attempt to restore authoritarian rule. Within days, thousands were dead, and Madero's ability to crush the revolt with armed force was eroding. After his principal general was seriously wounded, Madero asked the tough, no-nonsense General Victoriano Huerta to lead federal troops against the rebels. Huerta agreed but quickly took advantage of the chaotic situation and began consolidating power for himself. Within two weeks, Huerta had declared himself the provisional President of Mexico. He placed Madero under arrest and subsequently ordered his brutal execution, disguised as an escape attempt.

One of Huerta's chief allies in his bid to overthrow Madero was the American ambassador to Mexico Henry Lane Wilson. Wilson actively supported American oil, mining, railroad, and agricultural interests in Mexico and was directly involved with several prosperous enterprises. Madero's attempts at liberal reform had threatened the privileged position of American investors, and Ambassador Wilson supported Huerta's call for a return to a government respectful of capital investors.<sup>10</sup> Wilson also harbored a personal grudge against Madero, who had refused to bow to the ambassador's pressure to cater to the special interests and who had asked President William Howard Taft to recall Wilson to Washington.<sup>11</sup> When the fighting broke out in Mexico City in February, Wilson conspired with Huerta to overthrow the Madero government. There is no evidence implicating the American ambassador in Madero's execution, but with Madero gone, Lane Wilson rigorously lobbied the Taft Administration to recognize the Huerta regime.

As had been the case with its predecessors, the Taft Administration was generally inclined to recognize any government that was effectively in control of the affairs of state. But Taft was preparing to leave the White House, and the issue of recognition, which was not a high priority matter, was left to his successor.<sup>12</sup> Within two weeks of Madero's execution, Woodrow Wilson

was inaugurated as the twenty-eighth President of the United States. Wilson, an idealist and a moralist, did not take such a pragmatic approach to foreign affairs as did his predecessor. He believed he had been predestined as an instrument of both God and the people to make the world a better place.<sup>13</sup> Thus, shortly after taking office, he issued his “Declaration of Policy in Regard to Latin America,” in which he stated, “we can have no sympathy for those who seek to seize the powers of government to advance their own personal interests or ambitions . . . we shall prefer those who protect private rights and respect the constraints of constitutional provision.”<sup>14</sup> He refused to recognize the Huerta regime because he believed the general had seized power illegally and immorally. The assassination of Madero particularly appalled and disgusted Wilson.

Wilson continued to withhold diplomatic recognition of the Huerta regime, even though fourteen European nations had taken the step and U.S. business interests were in favor of it. Angered by the efforts to promote European economic interests despite Huerta’s dictatorial rule, Wilson vowed that Mexico and all of Latin America should free itself from European economic imperialism.<sup>15</sup> Powerful American corporations were also interested in maintaining Huerta’s authoritarian style of government that, in their opinion, catered to foreign investment and possessed the ability to ensure the political and economic stability necessary for continued corporate profits.<sup>16</sup> Wilson, however, refused to accept these arguments or to cave in under the pressure brought to bear by foreign governments and American business interests.

Meanwhile, the Mexican Revolution continued, with the Huerta regime opposed by armed rebels almost everywhere outside Mexico City. By May 1913, President Wilson had recalled Henry Lane Wilson and announced a policy of “watchful waiting.” As part of this cautious approach, the President placed an arms embargo on the Huerta regime, as well as on all opposition rebel groups, and proclaimed U.S. neutrality toward all factions in the continuing revolution. Though neutrality was now the Administration’s official policy, that policy would not preclude

Wilson, based upon his idealism and moralistic outlook, from intervening in Mexican affairs with military force in the future.

Idealism had been a feature of the American approach to foreign affairs from the beginning. Wilson's innovation was to use American power to advance and sustain idealism. The founding fathers, like Wilson, believed in an ordered, peaceful world community, but no American leader before Wilson had contemplated using American power to achieve it.<sup>17</sup>

At this point, Woodrow Wilson and American military power were not the primary threats to Victoriano Huerta. The real threat was brewing in northern Mexico, under the leadership of three of the greatest Mexican revolutionaries: Venustiano Carranza, Alvaro Obregón, and Francisco "Pancho" Villa.

Venustiano Carranza was the son of a landowner and had become active in local politics in the state of Coahuila in 1877, shortly after Porfirio Díaz rose to power. He was a political moderate who had associated himself with Díaz's modernization policies. By 1910, however, when he became governor of Coahuila, Carranza was disillusioned with the government's increasing authoritarian rule. He therefore joined in the struggle to overthrow Díaz and afterwards remained a loyal supporter of Madero throughout the reformer's presidential term. Unlike Madero, Carranza was politically astute and retained a sense of political flexibility. When the revolt against Madero broke out in Mexico City, Carranza continued his support of the President and offered him sanctuary in Saltillo, Coahuila, but he was also prepared for Madero's downfall. Following Madero's arrest by Victoriano Huerta, Carranza sought conciliation with the new regime, but was rebuffed. Carranza then became an outspoken critic of Huerta and began organizing for armed conflict.

Once Carranza went to war with Huerta, he discovered that he was no match for the general's military might. In late February 1913, federal troops loyal to the dictator occupied much of Coahuila and its capital at Saltillo. Carranza fled to the countryside, organized a small army, but failed in his attempt to retake Saltillo in March. He then decided to declare himself the leader

of all opposition to Huerta in Mexico and put forward the “Plan of Guadalupe,” which created a rebel government known as “Constitutionalist” and provided Carranza with the position of First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army and party. Representatives from two other northern Mexican states, Chihuahua and Sonora, ratified the plan, and Carranza began to consolidate his power base.

For three months, the First Chief continued to organize the Constitutionalists in Coahuila before moving his base of operations to Nogales, Sonora. The change of base proved to be wise. In Nogales, barely under any government control from Mexico City, Carranza was able to raise and equip troops without direct intervention from Huerta. He was also able to supply his army from nearby sources in the United States, even though an arms embargo was then in effect, and he discovered a decisive military leader in Alvaro Obregón.

Obregón had little formal education and, having spent much of his time as a farmer and laborer in Sonora, was familiar with the plight of poor Mexicans. While Obregón had not taken part in the initial phases of the revolution in 1910-11, he actively supported Madero’s presidency. It was in 1912, while fighting rebel forces in northern Mexico threatening Madero’s government, that Obregón began earning his reputation as a highly competent and successful citizen-soldier and military leader.

There would be one more great military leader from the north that would soon join Carranza’s struggle. In March 1913, Francisco “Pancho” Villa splashed across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas, where he had been in exile from the Huerta government. Beginning as far back as 1894, Villa had been one of the most feared bandits in northern Mexico. By the early twentieth century, his notoriety had grown to legendary proportions, and the American public, having read of his exploits in numerous dime novels popular at the time, became familiar with the Villa myth. He was a “cattle rustler, bandit, occasional operator of a butcher shop which he supplied with rustled cattle, womanizer, scourge of the wealthy, and friend of the oppressed.”<sup>18</sup>

Villa's real talent lay in his macho appeal to the lower classes and in his ability to recruit, motivate, and lead men on dangerous and demanding adventures. He began his political career with the Anti-reelectionists in October 1910, leading small groups of guerrilla fighters in Chihuahua in support of Madero. By May 1911, Villa was a leading field commander of Madero's rebel army in northern Mexico and played a prominent role in the capture of Juárez, the culminating event that led to Madero's seizing power. During the numerous uprisings of 1912, Villa continued to lead troops in Madero's army, by then under the command of General Huerta. Huerta, the regular army officer, harbored an intense dislike for Villa, whom he viewed as an ill-mannered peasant. Eventually, Huerta charged Villa with insubordination, found him guilty, and sentenced him to death. President Madero commuted the death sentence to imprisonment, but after a short prison term, Villa escaped and fled to El Paso in December 1912. After Madero's assassination, Villa returned as an outright enemy of the Huerta government, determined to avenge the death of the fallen President.

Having crossed the Rio Grande with only a handful of men, Villa set out during the spring of 1913 to create a fully capable armed force composed of cavalry, infantry, and artillery. He established a training ground for this purpose at Satevo, Chihuahua, but operations in the area proved perilous and he moved his base of operations to Ascensión, approximately eighty miles south of Columbus, New Mexico. While in Ascensión, Villa accomplished two important tasks: he came in contact and allied himself with Carranza's Constitutionalists, who supplied his army with artillery pieces, and he succeeded in forming his nearly one-thousand-man army into an effective fighting force, ready to begin serious campaigning by the end of summer 1913.<sup>19</sup>

Operating under the Constitutional banner, Villa planned to seize Chihuahua, consolidate his power there, then aim his operations at the heart of the Huerta regime in Mexico City. His army now numbered in the thousands, and his soldiers referred to themselves as the

“Division of the North.” During the fall of 1913, Villa achieved his first goal of seizing control of Chihuahua. Setting out from Ascensión, he seized the town of San Andrés, just southwest of Chihuahua City, then concentrated on gaining control of the main railroad line running south from Ciudad Juárez, through Chihuahua City, and on to Torreón in the state of Durango. In order to block possible federal reinforcements moving north from Mexico City, he first attacked and defeated federal forces at Torreón. Then, in November 1913, he moved into position to seize Chihuahua City, which he accomplished before the year was out. Once the commander of the Division of the North arrived victoriously in Chihuahua City, he began forming a rebel government and, shortly thereafter, defeated the remaining federal forces that had fled to Ojinaga, across the border from Presidio, Texas.<sup>20</sup>

As Villa consolidated power in Chihuahua during the last few months of 1913, other rebel commanders loyal to Carranza and the Constitutional cause were organizing armies and consolidating power in Sonora and Coahuila. By the beginning of 1914, Carranza and his followers had consolidated a huge power base in northern Mexico, and the stage was set for the eventual downfall of Victoriano Huerta. Three large armies now swore allegiance to the First Chief and the Constitutionalists: Alvaro Obregón’s Army Corps of the Northwest, headquartered in Sonora; Francisco Villa’s Division of the North, centered in Chihuahua; and Pablo González’s Army Corps of the Northeast, operating in Coahuila.<sup>21</sup> In March 1914, these three armies began moving south. Their overall objective was to converge on Mexico City and overthrow the Huerta regime. Obregón moved down the west coast, Villa moved through the center of the country, and González moved in the east toward Monterrey and Tampico. At the same time, an independent rebel army led by Emiliano Zapata, from the state of Morelos, was threatening Mexico City from the south.

Carranza's Constitutional forces continued to make progress, and by late March 1914, Villa's Division of the North was in a strategic position to move on Mexico City. But as victory against the Huerta regime appeared imminent, a falling out over future plans occurred between Carranza and Villa that would have profound effects on the future course of the revolution.<sup>22</sup> Villa had planned to seize Zacatecas, one of the last Huerta strongholds between the Division of the North and Mexico City, then march victoriously into the capital. But Carranza had begun to believe that Villa's army had grown too strong and that Villa might pose a threat to the overall Constitutional cause. He therefore denied Villa his moment of glory by diverting the Division of the North northward from its objective at Zacatecas, to seize an inconsequential federal garrison in Saltillo. Villa reluctantly obliged, but became enraged when he learned that Carranza had slighted him by sending other Constitutional forces to seize Zacatecas and eventually enter Mexico City.

Meanwhile, Carranza's Constitutional forces moving down the east coast closed on Tampico, and fighting broke out with Huerta's federal troops in the city. It was against this backdrop that the Tampico incident occurred. After sailing a small boat flying the American flag into the harbor, U.S. seamen went ashore attempting to purchase supplies from a German civilian in the town and were arrested by one of Huerta's officers. Upon learning of the arrest, the military governor of the city promptly released the sailors and sent his apologies to Admiral Henry T. Mayo, the ranking American naval officer on the scene.<sup>23</sup> Mayo refused the apology, instead demanding a formal twenty-one gun salute to the American flag by Mexican troops. The Mexicans refused. While formulating its response to the incident, the Wilson Administration received word that the German vessel Ypiranga was due to arrive at the port of Veracruz with an extensive arms shipment for Huerta's federal army. Wilson seized the opportunity created by the Tampico incident to inflict some damage on Huerta's continuing efforts to remain in power and

ordered the U.S. Navy to seize Veracruz. Tampico was of no strategic interest to the United States, but Veracruz was Mexico's principal port and seizing it would be an economic and political blow to the Huerta regime.<sup>24</sup> The U.S. Navy seized the city with marines and bluejackets on 21 April 1914. Before the month was out, a U.S. Army infantry brigade relieved the marine garrison and occupied the city for the next seven months.

With the Americans occupying Veracruz and Carranza's forces closing on Mexico City, Huerta resigned the Mexican Presidency in July 1914. He and his family boarded a German vessel and sailed for Spain. In August, Obregón entered Mexico City and claimed it in Carranza's name. The First Chief arrived in the capital a short time later and assumed power, but Villa was not there celebrating the Constitutional victory, as the rift created earlier in the campaign between Carranza and himself persisted. Carranza had also angered Zapata by granting amnesty to former Huerta officials in Mexico City if they swore allegiance to the Constitutionalists. Zapata was fighting what he considered a class struggle, and for that reason he was outraged at what he saw as Carranza endorsing the status quo. Obregón's initial attempts to mediate the differences between Carranza, Villa, and Zapata failed, but in September 1914 he succeeded in putting together an informal conference of the revolutionary generals. Little progress was made at that gathering, but the generals agreed to meet again at Aguascalientes.

The Convention at Aguascalientes opened in October 1914, and by this time the Constitutionalists had broken down into three warring camps led by Carranza, Villa, and Zapata. Followers of all three attended the convention. In addition to the rifts created among these three leaders during campaigning, Carranza had done much to alienate many of his former followers after he had seized power in Mexico City. He snubbed the diplomatic corps, refused to reconvene the Mexican Congress, shut down the court system, failed to appoint government ministers, and

printed Constitutionalist currency that caused inflation to spiral out of control.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, a large proportion of convention delegates opposed the First Chief.

The convention lasted over three weeks, ending early in November 1914, and produced several significant developments. Villa and Zapata formalized a political alliance based upon their common hatred of Carranza. The convention elected a political unknown, Eulalio Gutiérrez, to replace Carranza and ordered Carranza to give up power by 10 November 1914. Carranza refused to surrender his authority, but Villa's and Zapata's campaign to oust him gained momentum, causing many Carranza supporters in Mexico City to shift their allegiances. Once the conference ended, Villa and Zapata seized the capital, and the First Chief retired his government to the port of Veracruz, recently evacuated by the Americans. Villa and Zapata were in power, but they squandered any possibility of real political reform by overindulging in luxurious living for a few brief months in the capital.

Alvaro Obregón had remained loyal to Carranza, and that decision was to become decisive to the outcome of the revolution. Obregón reentered Mexico City at the end of January 1915, ousted Villa and Zapata, and saved the revolution from their more extremist brand of leadership.<sup>26</sup> The armies of Villa and Zapata separated and began to operate independently once again. Villa would operate in northern Mexico, while Zapata operated south of Mexico City.

Carranza moved his government back to the capital, but it remained threatened by rebel forces operating in the hinterlands. The largest of these threats came from Villa, and in April 1915, Obregón set out with his army to find and engage the Division of the North. Obregón's objective was to deal a decisive blow to Villa's army, thereby eliminating it as a threat to Carranza's consolidation of power. Knowing Villa's penchant for conducting frontal attacks on prepared defensive positions, Obregón established his army in a nearly impregnable defense near Celaya, in the state of Guanajuato, and planned to lure Villa into attacking. The plan worked.

Villa attacked on 6 April 1915 in what would become the largest land battle fought on the North American continent since the American Civil War.<sup>27</sup> The Battle of Celaya raged throughout the day. Villa resumed the attack the next morning but, after suffering heavy losses from Obregón's artillery, cavalry, and machine-gun fire, retired from the field of battle, vowing to return.

On the morning of 12 April 1915, Villa made good on his promise, and the second Battle of Celaya, "Villa's Waterloo,"<sup>28</sup> began. Villa's 20,000-man Division of the North attacked Obregón's 15,000-man army, the latter in strong defensive positions, for the second time. The killing lasted for three days, and when it was over, Villa had suffered a severe defeat. He then began moving the remnants of his once proud army northward and continued to suffer several setbacks at the hands of troops loyal to Carranza. By September 1915, Villa's area of influence had been reduced to operations solely within the state of Chihuahua. He was back where he had started in the late summer of 1913.

With Villa now in check, at least for the time being, Carranza began establishing a working government in Mexico City and continued appealing for U.S. diplomatic recognition of his Constitutionalist government. The time appeared right for such an appeal. The Wilson Administration was becoming increasingly entangled with European affairs as World War I entered its second full year. Consequently, the U.S. Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, advised President Wilson to put Mexican affairs on the back burner and, by recognizing the Carranza government, to refocus the efforts of the State Department on Europe.<sup>29</sup> Wilson agreed, and on 19 October 1915, the Wilson Administration recognized Venustiano Carranza as the President of Mexico.

The First Chief got the recognition he sought, but the revolution in Mexico continued. Although Villa had suffered a serious blow and posed no serious threat to Mexico City itself, he was still able to recruit men to his cause and organize a threat to Carranza in northern Mexico.

The long arm of the Carranza government was tenuous at best in the north, where bandits and marauders still roamed freely, and many of Carranza's local officials had agendas of their own. The revolution wore on in northern Mexico, and the violence and lawlessness associated with it began to increase dramatically along the U.S.-Mexican border, directly affecting the lives of Americans living there.

This border extended about one thousand miles, from the Gulf of Mexico, near Brownsville, Texas, up the Rio Grande to El Paso. From El Paso, the boundary consisted of a surveyed line, marked with barbed wire, extending westward across the Chihuahuan and Sonoran deserts, nearly another thousand miles, to California and the Pacific Ocean. Eighty miles west of El Paso was situated the town of Columbus, New Mexico, and stretching south into Chihuahua were the rugged Sierra Madre mountains.

Railroads had transformed the area of northern Mexico both politically and economically by 1915, especially within the state of Chihuahua.<sup>30</sup> (see fig. 2.) The Mexican National Railroad bisected the state. Beginning at El Paso and Juárez, it extended southward through Chihuahua City and Jiménez and continued on through Torreón in the state of Durango and beyond. A line extended west from Jiménez to Parral, then continued southward into Durango. Another line extended westward from Chihuahua City, then moved northward through the mining country of the Sierra Madres before cutting eastward, linking up with the national line again at Juárez. The Kansas City, Mexico, and Orient Railroad line crossed into northeastern Chihuahua from Texas and extended southwestward through Chihuahua City into Sinaloa.<sup>31</sup> The landscape along this portion of the border was characterized by rugged mountains, vast deserts, scrub vegetation, dust and sand storms, and scarce food and water supplies. It was near here, at Fort Bliss, Texas, that the United States Army posted Brigadier General John J. Pershing in 1914.

Pershing, best known for his command of the American Expeditionary Force during World War I, graduated from West Point in 1886 and spent the first five years of his career fighting Indians on the frontier. In 1891, the Army assigned him as a professor of military science at the University of Nebraska for a four-year tour. In 1895, he joined the 10th Cavalry and, after a brief assignment at West Point in 1897, returned to accompany the unit during the campaign in Cuba. Captain Pershing went on to earn national recognition for the three years he spent in the Philippines, subduing the Moro uprisings in the southern part of the archipelago. Upon his return to the United States in 1903, Pershing married the daughter of a prominent U.S. Senator, who was the chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. As a favor to his new son-in-law, the Senator quickly steered Pershing's promotion to Brigadier General through the Senate, and Pershing jumped immediately from the rank of Captain to that of a general officer. After spending another tour in the Philippines, he returned to the Presidio at San Francisco in early 1914. Three months later, the Army assigned him to command the 8th Cavalry Brigade at El Paso. Tragedy befell the general in August 1915, when Pershing learned that nearly his entire family was killed in a house fire at the Presidio. His therapy was to throw himself into his work, and there was plenty of it to do.<sup>32</sup> Both he and his immediate supervisor, Major General Frederick Funston, commanding the United States Army's Southern Department headquartered at San Antonio, were becoming more and more concerned with the increasing violence along the U.S.-Mexican border.

At the age of forty-six, Funston was the youngest general in the United States Army in 1914--Pershing was fifty-four at the time. Funston entered active federal service in 1898, when he raised a regiment of volunteers to fight in the Spanish-American War. He subsequently distinguished himself during the Philippine Insurrection and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for a daring mission in which he captured the commanding general of the

Philippine insurgents. Soon after, Funston was promoted to Brigadier General in the regular army, and in 1914, he commanded the American forces occupying Veracruz.

As Funston and Pershing settled into their work during the second half of 1915 and the beginning of 1916, three bloody events occurred that dramatically increased tensions among border residents and eventually led to Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico, and the formation of the Punitive Expedition. The first of these involved violence between Mexicans and Americans in the lower Rio Grande Valley, and the formulation of the San Diego Plan. The second incident was the Battle of Agua Prieta, and the third event was the massacre at Santa Isabel.

Carranza's government was incapable of enforcing the law in many parts of northern Mexico, the result being numerous border raids by bandits and marauders from Mexico into the United States in 1915. Sixteen raids were officially counted.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, fighting between Carranza supporters and rebel factions sometimes spilled over onto U.S. territory, as was the case in Brownsville, Texas, where tensions were running high. Troops loyal to Carranza had controlled the city of Matamoros, just across the Rio Grande from Brownsville, since June 1913, but fighting among rebels, outlaws, and Carranza's troops soon began spilling over into Brownsville. The situation alarmed the governor of Texas, who dispatched the state militia and requested additional federal aid. The Wilson Administration responded by ordering Major General Funston to cooperate with the Texas governor. Funston believed the Carranza government itself encouraged much of the violence in the vicinity of Brownsville, as evidenced by a local Carranza leader's manifesto called the "Plan of San Diego."

The San Diego Plan encouraged Mexicans and Mexican-Americans living in the border area to revolt and form an independent Mexican republic. This republic would consist of the U.S. border states and vast portions of the American West previously governed by Mexico prior to U.S. annexation in 1848. Mexico would later reincorporate the region under its flag.<sup>34</sup> The

United States and the citizens of Texas reacted to the San Diego Plan in a variety of ways: the U.S. military reinforced the lower Rio Grande border. Texas Rangers and state militia began playing a larger role in patrolling the border, and numerous vigilante groups were organized.

In October 1915, heavy fighting in Matamoros once again spilled over into Brownsville, and this time, the citizens of Brownsville prepared for war. American cannons were trained on the international bridge, and citizens in the outlying areas poured into the city, ready to fight. The Mexican citizens in Matamoros reacted in kind, and a war appeared imminent. The situation was diffused when the U.S. State Department intervened and convinced the Carranza government to get control of the situation in Matamoros. The violence in Matamoros ceased, but outlaws continued to plague American citizens along the border, and Americans began demanding that the U.S. government do something about it.

In November 1915, the violence shifted to the Sonora-Arizona border. Villa had suffered a serious defeat during and following the two battles at Celaya, but by now his army had managed to regain some organization and fighting spirit. When the governor of Sonora suggested to Villa that he continue his revolt against Carranza and attack Carranza's troops in Agua Prieta, Villa was up for the challenge. He still harbored a deep dislike for Carranza and saw this as an opportunity to deal the First Chief a military blow, as well as to strengthen his own position in northern Mexico. Villa's army consisted of 15,000 men, while the town of Agua Prieta was garrisoned by 3,000 Carranza troops. Villa did not know that the United States had recently recognized the Carranza government, or that the Americans had allowed Carranza to reinforce the Agua Prieta garrison with men and equipment by using railroads passing through Arizona and New Mexico. He attacked the garrison in his usual style of frontal assault and, like the Celaya battles, was repulsed by heavily entrenched defensive positions. A second attack failed, and Villa's army suffered heavy losses. He disengaged his forces and moved south toward the Sonoran capital of

Hermosillo. There, he attempted to link up with the governor's army in order to attack the Carranza garrison at Hermosillo, but when the link-up failed, he attacked the garrison alone. This was the last battle fought by the Division of the North. Villa's army was decimated by rifle and machine-gun fire. He fled to the Sierra Madre Mountains and remained there until early 1916.

After the battle at Hermosillo, Alvaro Obregón, now minister of war in Carranza's government, declared that the states of Chihuahua and Sonora were rid of the threat from Villa, and he encouraged American mining companies in the region to reopen. On 9 January 1916 one mining company sent seventeen of its employees westward on the train from Chihuahua City to resume operations. At Santa Isabel, several of Villa's followers stopped the train, robbed the passengers, and brutally murdered all the Americans, save one who escaped. The action outraged El Paso. Angry citizens were intent on crossing the border into Juárez to deal out vigilante justice, and American officials were forced to declare martial law to prevent further bloodshed. Once again, American citizens demanded that the U.S. government do something about the violence along the border.

Tensions remained high after the massacre at Santa Isabel. Villa remained in hiding in the Sierra Madre Mountains, but reports abounded concerning his alleged whereabouts. On 9 March 1916, he reappeared on the scene with about five hundred followers, and at 4:15 A.M., his band attacked the town of Columbus, New Mexico. About 350 people lived in Columbus at the time, and 350 of the 550 troopers of the U.S. 13th Cavalry Regiment were stationed at Camp Furlong, just south of town. The married officers and their families lived in Columbus, and on this night, Lieutenant John Lucas was the only officer in camp. Villa's raiders attacked in two columns as they rounded Cootes Hill southwest of town. Villa believed the town was garrisoned by only thirty soldiers, and one of his columns rode directly into Camp Furlong. Lieutenant Lucas was able to organize a hasty defense of the camp and provided some relief to the citizens in Columbus

with his machine-gun troop. Meanwhile, Villa's second column proceeded northeast, directly into the center of town. Here, Villa's men robbed, plundered, and set fire to the town's buildings. The Commercial Hotel was located there, and the vast majority of civilians who lost their lives in the Columbus raid were victims of a massacre at that site. Villa's men raided the hotel and executed all the male guests of the hotel they could find. The mayhem continued for over an hour. When the raiders finally realized the town was garrisoned by more than a few soldiers, they began departing shortly before daybreak. A total of seventeen Americans were killed in the raid.

Dawn approached by 6:00 A.M., and by this time, the 13th Cavalry was organized for effective operations. Major Frank Tompkins requested permission to pursue the raiders, and Colonel Herbert J. Slocum, the regimental commander, approved. Tompkins chased the bandits across the Mexican border and continued the pursuit for several hours. By Tompkins's own account, his troopers killed between seventy-five and one-hundred of the raiders.<sup>35</sup> He returned to Camp Furlong when his troopers were exhausted and ammunition was running low.

Several possible explanations exist to explain the possible reasons for Villa's attack on Columbus. Two of the most prominent suggest that Villa wanted to capture supplies and equipment, or that he wanted to kill American citizens in an attempt to start a war between the United States and the Carranza government.<sup>36</sup> The only thing known for sure is that Villa's raid triggered one of the more extraordinary military operations in the history of U.S.-Mexican relations--the Punitive Expedition.

<sup>1</sup>Clarence Clendenen, Blood on the Border (London: The Macmillan Co., Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1969), 72.

<sup>2</sup>John S. D. Eisenhower, Intervention! (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1993), xii.

<sup>3</sup>Clendenen, 82.

<sup>4</sup>Frank Tompkins, Chasing Villa (Harrisburg, PA: The Military Service Publishing Co., 1934), 1.

<sup>5</sup>Lester D. Langley, The Banana Wars (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1988), 78.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>7</sup>Friedrich Katz, The Secret War in Mexico (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 7.

<sup>8</sup>Langley, 80.

<sup>9</sup>Eisenhower, xiii.

<sup>10</sup>Katz, 159.

<sup>11</sup>Eisenhower, 20.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 31.

<sup>13</sup>James David Barber, The Presidential Character (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1977), 64.

<sup>14</sup>Mark T. Gilderhus, Diplomacy and Revolution (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1977), 3.

<sup>15</sup>Langley, 84.

<sup>16</sup>Eisenhower, 36.

<sup>17</sup>Carl N. Degler, Out of Our Past (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 422.

<sup>18</sup>Manuel A. Machado, Jr., "Francisco Pancho Villa," in The War of 1898 and U.S. Interventions 1898-1934, ed. Benjamin R. Beede (New York & London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1994), 564.

<sup>19</sup>Eisenhower, 51.

<sup>20</sup>Villa's campaign to seize Chihuahua City is one of the best examples of his cunning, audacity, and cleverness as a leader. Federal forces in Chihuahua City were strong, and the military situation soon developed into a stalemate. Having control of the railroad line running south of Chihuahua City to Torreón, Villa decided against laying siege to the city. Instead, he created a ruse to seize Juárez, control the railroad line running north from Chihuahua City, and make the federal commander's position untenable. Villa seized a train heading south from Juárez toward Chihuahua City and held the crew at gunpoint. He then ordered the telegrapher on board to deceive the station in Juárez by telling them the tracks continuing south were torn up and beyond repair, and that the engineer would have to back the train up the hundred or so miles to Juárez. Nearly 2,000 of Villa's cavalrymen boarded the train and remained concealed as it moved north. As they came into the Juárez station, Villa's men bolted out of the boxcars on horseback, surprised the local federal commander, and quickly seized the city. The federal commander in Chihuahua City dispatched a force to relieve Juárez, but instead of proceeding directly into town,

the relief force took up defensive positions south of the city. Villa conducted a slashing frontal attack and decimated the federal command. Upon hearing of the fate of the relief force, the federal commander abandoned his positions in Chihuahua City and fled toward Ojinaga. Source Eisenhower, 56-57.

<sup>21</sup>Robert E. Quirk, An Affair of Honor (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1962), 4.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>23</sup>Langley, 88.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 91.

<sup>25</sup>Eisenhower, 156.

<sup>26</sup>Edwin Lieuwen, The Political Rise and Fall of the Revolutionary Army (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968), 30.

<sup>27</sup>Eisenhower, 179.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 177.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 183.

<sup>30</sup>Katz, 7.

<sup>31</sup>H. A. Toulmin, With Pershing in Mexico (Harrisburg, PA: The Military Service Publishing Co., 1935), 19.

<sup>32</sup>John K. Mahon, "John Joseph Pershing (1860-1948)," in The War of 1898 and U.S. Interventions 1898-1934, ed. Benjamin R. Beede (New York & London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1994), 409.

<sup>33</sup>Clendenen, 183.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 181.

<sup>35</sup>Tompkins, 56.

<sup>36</sup>Eisenhower, 227.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ACTIVE PURSUIT

#### The Expedition Enters Mexico

Official news of Villa's raid reached Washington three hours after it was over. The deputy customs collector at Columbus, New Mexico, cabled his superior in El Paso, Zach Cobb, who promptly relayed a telegram to the U.S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing. The details of the incident were sketchy, but Cobb indicated that Columbus had been attacked, probably by Villa. American deaths had occurred, portions of the town had been burned, and U.S. soldiers had pursued the attackers into Mexico.<sup>1</sup> The news appeared in the newspapers later the same day.<sup>2</sup> Americans read about the incident in their evening papers and wondered what actions the Wilson Administration would take.

The State Department initially reserved judgment on the incident until further facts could be determined.<sup>3</sup> A flurry of telegrams issued forth among the Department of State, American and Mexican officials along the southwest border, and Mexican diplomats in Washington. Representatives of the Carranza government deplored the attack, informing the United States that federal troops were pursuing Villa in northern Mexico, and that Mexico City would send additional soldiers to the state of Chihuahua to effect Villa's capture. But American officials in the southwest, citing the general inactivity of the small Mexican troop garrisons in and around Juárez, were skeptical of Mexico's ability to capture Villa and ensure the safety of American citizens along the border. Meanwhile, the Wilson Administration continued to gather information relating the gruesome characteristics of the Columbus raid.

On the day following the raid, 10 March 1916, Major General Frederick Funston requested that the War Department authorize him to pursue Villa into Mexico with an armed force.<sup>4</sup> Funston reasoned that the Mexican government was doing nothing to pursue and capture Villa, as evidenced by the fact that Carranza's troops in northern Mexico had lost contact with Villa and could not relate his whereabouts. Funston also told the War Department that he believed that Villa would continue to raid American border towns, and that it would be futile for the U.S. military to attempt to garrison every town and ranch along the border, since Villa could attain refuge in Chihuahua.<sup>5</sup>

The War Department agreed with Funston's assessment, and during an emergency cabinet meeting on the morning of 10 March, Baker recommended with unanimous cabinet approval that Wilson authorize Funston to pursue Villa into Mexico. Wilson accepted the recommendation and issued a statement to the press immediately following the meeting informing them that an "adequate force will be sent at once in pursuit of Villa with the single object of capturing him and putting a stop to his forays."<sup>6</sup> Later that day the War Department telegraphed the following instructions to Funston.

The President has directed that an armed force be sent into Mexico with the sole object of capturing Villa and preventing any further raids by his band, and with scrupulous regard to sovereignty of Mexico. Secretary War directs you telegraph exactly what you need in order to carry out foregoing general instructions, but you will not take any overt steps until receipt definite orders from War Department.<sup>7</sup>

The Secretary of War, Newton Diehl Baker, expanded on these initial orders in a memorandum to the Chief of Staff in Washington, Major General Hugh L. Scott, who finalized and telegraphed these follow-on orders to Funston in San Antonio.

You will promptly organize an adequate military force of troops under the command of Brigadier General J.J. Pershing and will direct him to proceed promptly across the border in pursuit of the Mexican band which attacked the town of Columbus and the troops there on the morning of the 9th instant. These troops will be withdrawn to American territory as soon as the de facto Government of Mexico is able to relieve them of this work. In any event the work of these troops will be regarded as finished as soon as Villa's band or bands are known to be broken up.<sup>8</sup>

Scott's orders also directed Funston to employ whatever guides and motor transportation he deemed necessary for the operation, and he included a requirement that Funston employ a small unit of U.S. Army aircraft recently organized at San Antonio. Additionally, Scott authorized all U.S. troops in the vicinity of the border to conduct hot pursuits of bandits conducting cross-border raids.

Funston immediately requested that the National Guard be called out to guard border towns against any future raids. He reasoned that this would free regular Army troops to take part in the pursuit of Villa. He also requested that he be authorized to seize Mexican railroads in northern Chihuahua for the purpose of supplying Pershing's command. Baker denied both requests. He refused to call out the National Guard on the grounds that doing so would fuel speculation as to the inadequacy of the regular army and lend greater gravity to the situation than it deserved. Furthermore, he prohibited Funston from seizing Mexican property; the railroads were to be used only in a normal commercial manner.<sup>9</sup>

Funston relayed Scott's telegram to Pershing word-for-word, and these instructions became the initial orders under which Pershing would operate.<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting here that these orders from the War Department did not require Pershing to capture Villa, but merely to pursue and disperse his band or bands of brigands. The State Department on the other hand, issued press releases stating that the sole purpose of the operation was Villa's capture.<sup>11</sup> Pershing realized that Villa's capture would decidedly serve to break up and disperse his band; thus capturing the revolutionary leader became the initial focus of Pershing's military operation.

The object of capturing Villa also became the initial focus of news stories throughout the country. Newspapers zeroed in on the story line suggesting Villa "would be taken dead or alive," and several prominent papers even ran editorials calling for the military occupation of Mexico, or annexation of the entire country.<sup>12</sup> Two rival newspaper publishers in particular, William

Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, greatly influence public sentiment regarding Wilson's policies toward Mexico and the military operation getting underway. Both called for the Administration to take strong action against the perpetrators of the Columbus raid. Hearst, in fact, owned a fair amount of property in Chihuahua, to include a large and prosperous cattle ranch on the Barbicora Plateau, (see fig. 3). No doubt he probably wanted to protect his assets from the likes of Villa, and Hearst newspapers would eventually call for an American invasion of Mexico.<sup>13</sup> Whatever the case, the public came to believe that capturing Villa was the sole object of the Punitive Expedition, and they would judge the outcome of the operation on that basis.<sup>14</sup>

Neither invasion, occupation, nor annexation of Mexican territory was to be the focus of U.S. policy, as the War Department began planning the military operation, and as the State Department began diplomatic initiatives. On 10 March 1916, Carranza sent a message through his foreign minister to Secretary of State Lansing, proposing a reciprocal agreement allowing military forces from both countries to cross the international border in pursuit of Villa.<sup>15</sup> The First Chief stated that Villa had escaped his troops in Chihuahua by crossing back into the United States, and his proposal sought U.S.-Mexican cooperation in the matter. The Wilson Administration delayed judgment. A short time later, Carranza, having received word that the United States was planning to enter Mexico with a large military expedition, sent the following warning through his foreign minister to Lansing on 13 March.

If the Government of the United States does not take into consideration the mutual permission for American and Mexican forces to cross into the territory of one another in pursuit of bandits and insists in sending an operating army into Mexican soil, my Government shall consider this act as an invasion of national territory.<sup>16</sup>

The First Chief added that he was still awaiting a reply to his reciprocal agreement proposal of 10 March, but warned that a U.S. invasion could result in a war between the two countries, even if the United States entered Mexico under the pretext of capturing Villa in order to turn him over to Mexican authorities.

President Wilson met with Lansing on 13 March and concluded that the warning was meant merely for Mexican domestic consumption.<sup>17</sup> They decided to accept Carranza's earlier proposal regarding a reciprocal agreement. Wilson authorized the State Department to inform Carranza that the United States government considered the reciprocal agreement to be "complete and in force, and that both governments could henceforth exercise their reciprocal privileges without further consultations."<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, Pershing had organized his forces and on 14 March issued General Orders No. 1, which created a provisional division officially designated the Punitive Expedition, with headquarters at Columbus, New Mexico.<sup>19</sup> Lieutenant Colonel DeRosey C. Cabell was named Chief of Staff, and the expedition was organized into three provisional brigades: the 1st Provisional Cavalry Brigade commanded by Colonel James Lockett, the 2nd Provisional Cavalry Brigade commanded by Colonel George H. Dodd, and the 1st Provisional Infantry Brigade commanded by Colonel John H. Beacon. The cavalry brigades were each composed of two cavalry regiments and a field artillery battery, while the infantry brigade was composed of two infantry regiments and the majority of engineer, signal, and medical support units. (see appendix A, Order of Battle.)

Pershing was ready to enter Mexico. The regiments that composed the provisional brigades had marched from locations in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas and had concentrated along the U.S.-Mexican border. Pershing's plan was to cross the border in two columns. (see fig. 3.) The eastern column consisting of the 1st Provisional Cavalry Brigade and the 1st Provisional Infantry Brigade had concentrated at Columbus and would enter Mexico through Palomas, Chihuahua. The western column consisting of the 2nd Provisional Brigade which had concentrated at Hatchita, New Mexico, would cross the border via Culberson's Ranch, in the southwestern corner of the state. The original plan called for the two columns to link up in

northern Chihuahua at Ascención, but Pershing received word that Villa had recently passed south of Ascención, so he changed the link up point to Casas Grandes in order to avoid further delays.<sup>20</sup> Once in Casas Grandes, the expedition would conduct operations as the situation dictated.

Before the Punitive Expedition could cross the border, however, the Carrancista officer in charge of a handful of soldiers operating as a border guard in Palomas sent word to Pershing's headquarters that he would oppose any entry into Mexico with armed force if necessary. Palomas was only a few short miles south of Columbus, and the border guard had noticed the concentration of American troops across the border. Pershing requested guidance from Funston, who immediately notified the War Department of the situation. In his message, Funston added that, unless ordered otherwise, he would authorize Pershing to cross the border on 15 March.<sup>21</sup> Upon receiving Funston's telegram, Secretary Baker took up the Palomas matter with the President. Wilson stated that if Funston's report was correct, he would not send U.S. troops into Mexico, as it would mean intervention and war.<sup>22</sup> On the morning of 15 March, Baker telegraphed instructions to Funston and Pershing outlining the terms of the reciprocal agreement that the President and Lansing understood to be in effect. The Carranza government, Baker indicated, would allow U.S. entry into Mexico in accordance with that agreement of 13 March. In a reference to the commander of the Palomas border guard, Baker added, "if the military representative of the de facto Government of Mexico refuses to tolerate your crossing the border, wire fully what he says about his instructions before crossing, and await further orders."<sup>23</sup>

As it turned out, this proved unnecessary. While Washington had been discussing the issue, Pershing had notified the Mexican commander in Palomas of his intentions to cross the border whether opposed or not, and the Mexicans suddenly deserted their posts. The border guard was nowhere to be seen when the eastern column of the Punitive Expedition crossed the border unopposed at Palomas at noon on 15 March. The western column entered Mexico later the same

day. At this point in the mission, Pershing was under the impression that the reciprocal agreement mentioned by Baker in his instructions was in force. In fact, however, the Carranza government had yet to reply to Lansing's memo, which had deemed the agreement in effect with no further consultation required. Officially, the Carranza government still opposed any entry of U.S. troops into their territory.

As the Punitive Expedition entered Mexico, President Wilson decided to clarify the nature of the expedition and sent written instructions to Secretary Baker. Baker relayed the President's instructions in the following telegram through the Chief of Staff, General Scott, to Funston on 16 March.

In view of the great distance between the seat of Government and the forces in the field, the President regards it as of the utmost importance that General Funston and all officers in command of troops of the United States clearly understand the exact nature of the expedition of our forces into Mexico, and he therefore directs obedience in letter and in spirit to the following orders:

ONE. If any organized body of troops of the de facto Government of the Republic of Mexico are met, they are to be treated with courtesy and their cooperation welcomed, if they desire to cooperate in the objects of the expedition.

TWO. Upon no account or pretext, and neither by act, word or attitude of any American commander, shall this expedition become or be given the appearance of being hostile to the integrity or dignity of the Republic of Mexico, by the courtesy of which this expedition is permitted to pursue an aggressor upon the peace of these neighboring Republics.

THREE. Should the attitude of any organized body of troops of the de facto Government of Mexico appear menacing, commanders of the forces of the United States are, of course, authorized to place themselves and their commands in proper situation of defense, *and if actually attacked they will of course defend themselves by all means at their command*, but in no event must they attack or become the aggressor with any such body of troops.<sup>24</sup>

FOUR. Care is to be taken to have in a state of readiness at all times the means of rapid communications from the front to the headquarters of the General commanding the Department, and, through him, to the War Department in Washington; and any evidence of misunderstanding on the part of officials, military or civil, of the de facto Government of Mexico as to the objects, purposes, character or acts of the expedition of the United States, are to be reported to the Department with the utmost expedition, with a view to having them taken up directly with the Government of Mexico through the Department of State.

The definite form of these orders is adopted for explicitness, and is not to be construed as implying any doubt on the part of the President in the discretion of the officers to whom they are directed.<sup>25</sup>

General Pershing acknowledged receipt of the above orders on 16 March, and his two columns continued their drive into Mexico. The western column had done a forced march to Culberson's Ranch on 14 March, then departed late in the evening of 15 March to begin its move toward Casas Grandes. Pershing had chosen to lead this column himself, but was involved in an automobile accident that delayed his departure. Not being hurt in the mishap, he arrived on horseback soon thereafter to lead the troopers across the border. The column marched twenty-five miles during the night and went into bivouac at 6:00 A.M. on 16 March. Pershing and his men resumed the march at noon, marching another thirty miles that day. On 17 March the column marched another sixty-eight miles, arriving at Colonia Dublan in the evening.<sup>26</sup> Both men and animals were pushed to the limit in this fast-paced movement through rugged country.

The eastern column was slower in arriving at its destination, the result of its being partly composed of the infantry brigade, which had to march on foot, and of the longer distance it had to travel from Columbus. Both columns experienced similar conditions. The evenings were frigid, and water in canteens often froze during the night. The trails were narrow and dusty. Troops often encountered dead bodies, remnants of once functional adobe structures, and abandoned villages, the results of the years of revolution and violence in northern Mexico.<sup>27</sup> By the evening of 20 March, the main bodies of both columns closed on Colonia Dublan, a sparsely populated area just north of Casas Grandes, where Pershing chose to concentrate his army in order to avoid occupying the town of Casas Grandes itself. Colonia Dublan would function as the expedition's base of operations.

Meanwhile, the Mexican Foreign Relations Office queried the State Department as to the mission of the U.S. troops on Mexican soil. Carranza sent a message through his foreign minister to Lansing on 18 March strongly protesting the Punitive Expedition's presence in Mexico. The First Chief declared that any reciprocal agreement on hot pursuits did not apply in this case, since

he had not yet formally agreed to any specific conditions for such an agreement.<sup>28</sup> A second message soon followed in which the Mexican government outlined its proposal governing hot pursuits: they should be limited to one-thousand cavalrymen, and they should operate no more than sixty kilometers from the border, and for a period not to exceed five days.<sup>29</sup> Mexico requested that the United States completely withdraw the Punitive Expedition since it did not meet these terms in either size or operating distance from the border. On 19 March, the Mexican Foreign Minister specifically requested information pertaining to the number of American troops in Mexico, their branch of service, the name of their commanding officer, their location, and the purpose of their crossing.”<sup>30</sup>

The State Department replied by saying the U.S. government deemed that a reciprocal agreement had been in place since 13 March and that the United States was operating under the terms of that agreement. If the Mexican government wanted to negotiate terms for a new agreement, the message went on to say, the United States would consider the request, although no such negotiations would affect the operations of the Punitive Expedition already in Mexico. The State Department then informed the Mexican Foreign Office that U.S. troops in Mexico were composed of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, were commanded by Brigadier General Pershing, and were engaged in operations solely for the purpose of capturing Villa. The State Department added that Pershing’s exact location could not be determined, but went on to say that the expedition would be withdrawn once Villa was captured by either American or Mexican troops.<sup>31</sup>

By 21 March, the Punitive Expedition had consolidated a forward base at Colonia Dublan, Chihuahua, approximately 130 miles south of Columbus, New Mexico.<sup>32</sup> Pershing now developed his plans for the next stage of the operation. Three independent cavalry columns would disperse from Colonia Dublan between 17 and 20 March. They would proceed south along parallel routes, operating between the eastern slopes of the Sierra Madre Occidentals and the Santa

Maria River. The plan was designed to capture Villa by quickly trapping him between the moving columns. Each column would be in position to come to the aid of the other two should trouble arise.

#### Three Cavalry Columns Begin the Chase

While the diplomatic dialogue between the State Department and the Mexican Foreign Office ground to a stalemate, the military activities of the Punitive Expedition entered a new phase. Up to this point, Pershing's focus was on establishing a logistical base at Columbus, New Mexico, and concentrating his previously dispersed regiments in an operational base in northern Chihuahua. With these two tasks accomplished, Pershing set out in earnest to find Pancho Villa.

Since the expedition's operations were now concentrated at Colonia Dublan, so were the efforts of the newspaper correspondents. Several reporters traveled down from El Paso by automobile and linked up with Pershing's headquarters. Some of these men, including Floyd Gibbons of the Chicago Tribune, would stay with the general's headquarters, moving southward with it as the campaign developed.<sup>33</sup> Upon arriving at a telegraph station in Chihuahua, the correspondents would wire news of the expedition back to El Paso and points north as the operation progressed. Other reporters remained in Columbus, El Paso, and San Antonio, Texas, and gathered news off the telegraph wires as reports from the expedition came in. By far the speediest information from Chihuahua, but not necessarily the most reliable, came from the Carrancistas themselves, who in an attempt to disseminate propaganda favorable to their cause, often telegraphed their interpretation of events directly to the United States.

Intelligence reports gathered from the local populace in and around Colonia Dublan suggested that Villa was somewhere in the vicinity of San Miguel, a small town on the Barbicora Plateau approximately fifty miles south of Pershing's base of operations. His plan called for a cavalry column, consisting of the 7th Cavalry commanded by Colonel James B. Erwin, to move

southeast along the Santa Maria River toward Galeana and El Valle, then scale the eastern slope of the Sierra Madres and proceed toward San Miguel. A second column, consisting of the 2nd Squadron of the 10th Cavalry of Buffalo Soldiers commanded by Colonel William C. Brown, was to move by rail to Rucio before detraining and proceeding to San Miguel.<sup>34</sup> A third column consisted of the 1st Squadron of the 10th Cavalry, commanded by Major Ellwood Evans. He was to move by rail to the vicinity of Madera, about thirty-five miles southwest of San Miguel, and block any attempt by Villa's army to move off the plateau and into the more rugged country to the west.

The two columns of the 10th Cavalry immediately ran into trouble with the rail movement. Since Pershing was under orders not to seize any Mexican railroad property, and Carranza had recently prohibited the use of Mexican railroads by U.S. troops even if properly compensated, Pershing requested that locomotives and cars from El Paso be sent down to Colonia Dublan. His request was handled by the general manager of the El Paso Southwestern Railroad, who promptly organized several of his company's less desirable cars and locomotives, sent them to Juárez, and hired Mexican nationals to take the train southward. When the train arrived, the Buffalo Soldiers found the cars in such a state of disrepair that it took several days to ready them to transport men and animals.

Once Colonel Brown's column was boarded and on the way toward Rucio, further delays were created by the Mexicans hired to operate the train. Fearing attack by Carranza sympathizers, the engineer refused to stop for supplies in Casas Grandes, causing the train nearly to run out of fuel and water along a desolate stretch of the track. These shortages forced the engineer to uncouple the locomotive, in order to conserve fuel, and proceed approximately ten miles to the next way station where it was sufficiently resupplied. After the locomotive returned and hooked back up to the troop cars, Colonel Brown then found it necessary to bribe the engineer to continue

south. As the train approached Rucio, it could not pull the cars up a steep grade located several miles north of the town, whereupon Brown detrained his cavalrymen and headed toward San Miguel on horseback, arriving there on 21 March.

Major Evans's squadron of Buffalo Soldiers encountered many of the same problems on their way to Madera, but also suffered a tragic accident in the Cumbre Pass, a rugged section of the railroad line just west of San Miguel. While climbing the steep grade, several of the cars uncoupled and rolled recklessly back down the track and overturned. Nearly a dozen of Evans's men were critically injured. The major detrained his command and headed directly for San Miguel, sending the injured on ahead to Madera with that part of the train not damaged in the accident.

The two columns of the 10th Cavalry closed on San Miguel, but Villa was nowhere to be found. The Buffalo Soldiers scoured the countryside, following numerous leads from the local residents as to Villa's whereabouts, but met with no success. For the next thirty days, the 10th Cavalry would operate at altitudes near 7,000 feet, resulting in cool days and bitterly cold nights. All the while, they lived off the land, receiving no resupply from Colonia Dublan until 20 April.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, the 7th Cavalry was riding south along the Santa Maria River. Pershing, who remained at Colonia Dublan for the time being, ordered Colonel George Dodd to link-up with the regiment and coordinate the efforts of all three columns. Erwin remained in regimental command, but Dodd would effectively control its and the 10th Cavalry's operations.

The 7th Cavalry moved south through Galeana and on to El Valle, where Dodd briefly ran into a Carrancista officer known only to him as Colonel Salas. Dodd asked Salas for information and assistance in determining Villa's whereabouts, but Salas was not inclined to cooperate and questioned Dodd's authority to be operating in Mexico. Dodd informed him of the reciprocal agreement authorizing hot pursuits. Salas replied that his government had not officially notified

him that the agreement was in effect. He remained uncooperative, but the ice was finally broken when Salas admitted being attacked and severely thrashed by Villa and his forces a few days earlier. He offered Dodd information that Villa was in Namiquipa, about fifty miles farther south along the river. He also provided the 7th Cavalry with an escort through El Valle.

Upon arriving in Namiquipa, Dodd learned from his scouts that Villa had in fact been in town, but had been wounded and driven out by another of Carranza's officers, Colonel Apolonio Cano. Further scouting reports indicated that Villa had fled toward the southwest, in the general direction of Guerrero. Reinforcing the credibility of these reports was a message Dodd received from Colonel Brown, delivered by three of Cano's soldiers. Brown reported that both columns of Buffalo Soldiers were consolidated in the vicinity of San Miguel, and that he had received what he called reliable information that Villa had been wounded in a fight at Namiquipa and was fleeing toward the southwest. Brown added that Colonel Cano was cooperating with the effort to find the bandit. The Mexican officer had agreed to scout the area south of San Miguel, pin Villa down, and report his location to Brown.

Over the next several days, the 10th Cavalry continued to scout the Barbicora Plateau south of San Miguel, while the 7th Cavalry continued its move down the Santa Maria River toward Bachiniva, and on to Guerrero. Both regiments employed numerous Mexican guides, hired by the officers from the local population as they moved through the countryside. The vast majority of these guides proved to be unreliable as they led the cavalrymen on roundabout routes through the Sierra Madres. As the search for Villa continued, a flood of conflicting reports and rumors of the bandit's whereabouts inundated the two regimental commanders. For the Americans to follow up on all these reports would have led them in circles for weeks. It soon became apparent to Brown and Dodd that their Mexican guides and locals, along with Cano and his band of federal troops, were intentionally misleading them.<sup>36</sup> Brown stated in his report that

Cano had deliberately lied and misled him.<sup>37</sup> As mentioned beforehand, the Carrancista colonel had agreed to cooperate with the Americans by locating Villa and reporting his position. But Brown, after delaying his movements for more than a day, discovered that Cano never even bothered to send scouts out to begin the search. Pershing also reported to Funston that "practically every Mexican so far encountered had questioned our right to be in Mexico and claimed no authority for our presence."<sup>38</sup> He went on to add that "all information from native sources was false."<sup>39</sup>

The Punitive Expedition's relations with the local population in Chihuahua were twofold. First, in keeping with Wilson's initial guidance for the conduct of the expedition, the Americans were obliged to maintain amiable relations with Carranza's federal officers and troops. Second, also in keeping with Wilson's guidance, the Americans were required to deal in a fair and friendly manner with the local inhabitants. Relations with the Carrancistas were strained due to Carranza's instructions to his generals in Chihuahua not to cooperate with the Americans, especially evident by the First Chief's orders prohibiting the American use of Mexican railroads. The deceptive actions of such officers as Colonel Cano also strained relations. Not cooperating with the Americans, however, did not mean overtly attacking Pershing's troops, and there is no evidence at this time suggesting that Carranza ordered any offensive actions against the Punitive Expedition.

Relations with the local civilian inhabitants were another matter. Because many of Pershing's cavalrymen in the lead columns were often cut off from normal logistical supply, the Americans purchased supplies such as food and forage from the local population. The preferred method of procurement was for an army officer to make arrangements for provisions from a local inhabitant, then issue a receipt from the United States government for payment. The receipt method was best summed up by one citizen of Chihuahua who stated:

Now you buy a cow from a man who lives a hundred miles from any railroad. Even if that railroad were operating it would be six months before he could get his mail. You take that cow and you kill it and you give him a receipt. He mails that receipt to the Quartermaster at

San Antonio in Texas. It takes, maybe, six months for it to get there, if it gets there at all. When the Quartermaster gets it he cannot pay for it. He returns duplicate vouchers to be signed. They take another six months to reach the man, and then he cannot write and he cannot read English. If you can do all these things and sign in the proper place--even then he gets, about 18 months later, a check that he cannot cash.<sup>40</sup>

Needless to say, this method proved extremely unpopular with the Mexican people and soon became almost completely useless for purchasing supplies.

Complicating the matter even further was the fact that many of the local inhabitants were sympathetic toward Villa's plight. They could, however, with the promise of immediate cash payment, be persuaded to assist the Americans. Since cash was in short supply, many officers paid for provisions out of their own pockets, but as the campaign progressed, cash became a commodity supplied through the logistical system.

Besides provisions, the Americans paid for an assortment of scouts and guides to assist their movements through the rugged Chihuahua terrain. Guides were employed from a number of sources and included American civilians living in Mexico. They were usually employed by one of the American-owned mining or agricultural enterprises operating in Chihuahua, but found the time to make a few extra dollars guiding Pershing's troops. Another source of guides consisted of Apache scouts from Arizona. Funston authorized their organization and enlistment in the service of the U.S. Army specifically for the expedition. Both sources proved effective in navigating the cavalry columns through the numerous mountain passes and valleys of Chihuahua, but guides with knowledge of Villa's movements and whereabouts could only be found among the local citizens.

Whereas the American civilians and Apache scouts proved to be reliable guides as far as navigating the terrain was concerned, the same was not true of local citizens claiming to have knowledge of Villa's whereabouts. American commanders at all levels often paid local inhabitants for information concerning Villa's movements and hired locals to guide them across terrain when other, more reliable sources, were unavailable. As mentioned beforehand, many

local inhabitants were sympathetic to the Villista cause and, as Pershing and Dodd pointed out, often misled the Americans and proved unreliable.

Nevertheless, Dodd acted on information his scouts had picked up from native sources in Namiquipa suggesting that Villa had headed toward the town of Guerrero. Not knowing whether this information was intended to mislead him or not, Dodd moved the 7th Cavalry toward Guerrero, in what would prove to be the first significant engagement of the Punitive Expedition.

The Battle of Guerrero took place on 29 March 1916.<sup>41</sup> The village was located in a narrow valley running north-south. A small river passed just to the west of the town, and prominent hill masses rose on the east and west sides of the valley. Dodd's scouts had reported Villa's followers were in the town, and to prevent their escape across the river, Dodd positioned one squadron of cavalry on the hill masses west of town in blocking positions. As a second squadron of cavalry moved up the valley from the south, it received rifle fire from Guerrero, took up defensive positions, and returned fire.

As it turned out, many of the Villistas in the town were able to escape by employing a ruse. In somewhat of a haphazard column, they began moving out of Guerrero toward the northeast while flying the Mexican national colors. Keeping in mind their orders not to attack or become the aggressor against any body of Mexican federal troops, the Americans withheld their fire. By the time Dodd's men realized they had been deceived, many of the Villistas had been able to reach the mountains east of town. Several troops of U.S. cavalry pursued, but once in the hills, the Villistas quickly dispersed along what seemed a hundred different escape routes.

Those who remained in town and fought Dodd's troopers were not so lucky. Thirty of Villa's followers were killed, including one general. Villa, however, was not present that day. After interviewing a doctor in town, Dodd learned that Villa was suffering from a serious leg wound and had headed south the day before with 150 men. Although the Guerrero fight did not

result in Villa's capture, it did succeed in breaking up a large portion of his band and scattering it in several directions. The 7th Cavalry suffered a total of five wounded troopers, and these results were telegraphed to Pershing, who forwarded the report through Funston to the War Department.<sup>42</sup> Baker sent his congratulations, and Dodd, 63-years-old and nearing retirement, was promoted to Brigadier General and served a time as Pershing's second in command before leaving the service.

Meanwhile, Colonel Brown's Buffalo Soldiers decided to begin their move toward Guerrero, knowing that the 7th Cavalry had headed in that direction. Along the way, one of Brown's cavalry troops moved toward the town of Aguas Calientes on 1 April, and, in so doing, received rifle fire from Villistas in the town. Major Charles P. Young immediately raised his saber and led a dashing cavalry charge toward the enemy position. As his squadron moved through town, Young discovered that the ambush party had fled. The fight had been brief, but, together with the skirmish at Guerrero, marked the first two encounters of the Punitive Expedition with Villa's men in Chihuahua.

As the campaign of the three columns progressed, Pershing concerned himself with the logistics of the expedition. Supply by railroad had become nearly impossible due to Carranza's orders prohibiting the use of Mexican locomotives and cars, the poor quality of equipment that the El Paso Southwestern Railroad was willing to send into Chihuahua for military purposes, and the uncooperative attitude of Mexican nationals hired by civilians in El Paso to engineer the trains. Pershing was consequently forced to use other means to supply his army, and motor transport became the method.

Several hundred thousand dollars were therefore spent by the War Department to purchase motor vehicles for the resupply operation. Starting with only a handful of trucks in March 1916, the number of vehicles supporting the Punitive Expedition increased to over 600 by June. This was a huge innovation in military logistical support, and it took time to begin operating

efficiently. The trucks themselves required a huge maintenance facility which was set up in Columbus, New Mexico.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to motor transport, Pershing had been instructed by Funston to use the aero squadron stationed at San Antonio. Pershing had intended to use the aircraft in a reconnaissance role, but the aero squadron encountered several problems in that respect. The general reported to Funston on 21 March that several of the aircraft were unable to fly due to mechanical failures. Those that remained air worthy found their engines incapable of powering flight in the thin air of the high altitudes in the Sierra Madres.<sup>44</sup> Before the end of April 1916, all but two of the aero squadron's planes had crashed. Their reconnaissance role was never realized, but the squadron did succeed in quickly transmitting many important messages from Pershing to his dispersed cavalry columns in the field.<sup>45</sup>

Both the 10th Cavalry and the 7th Cavalry slowly continued their move southward, but by this time the strain on the men and the animals was beginning to take its toll. By 4 April, the campaign of these three columns had essentially concluded. Pershing believed that the fights at Guerrero and Aguas Calientes had seriously damaged the cohesion of Villa's forces by dispersing them throughout the Sierra Madres. He decided to pick up the chase with four fresh cavalry detachments in another campaign of mutually supporting columns that would attempt to reach the Durango border. With this in mind, he issued the following orders to his command.

All officers and enlisted men of this command are cautioned against a feeling of overconfidence as to the final result to be achieved by this expedition. The Commanding General appreciates most highly the work already performed by this command, and considers it exceptional in many respects to anything heretofore recorded in the annals of the army. All members of the command are urged to put forth renewed energy both as individuals and as organizations in an effort to accomplish successfully the mission entrusted to the expedition by our people.<sup>46</sup>

It appears likely from these instructions that Pershing may have doubted the ability of the Punitive Expedition to capture Villa. His lines of communications were quickly becoming

overextended, running hundreds of miles into Chihuahua, and his logistical support, heavily dependent on motor transport, was yet to operate efficiently. He also recognized by this time, contrary to the War Department's understanding of the reciprocal agreement on hot pursuits, that the local population, along with Carranza's government troops, were not going to cooperate. Finally, Pershing's orders from the War Department remained unchanged: the purpose of the expedition was to break up Villa's band, and on this point Pershing had made progress. Nonetheless, the chase for Villa continued.

#### Four New Detachments Pick Up the Pursuit

Pershing's plan for the continued pursuit of Villa, in the event that the original three columns failed to capture him, was implemented in late March when four additional cavalry detachments slowly set out from Colonia Dublan. These detachments were generally composed of five or six cavalry troops consisting of between 150 and 250 officers and men. Initially the detachments were to remain north of the 7th and 10th Cavalry spearheads, with orders to react to any situation that developed. After the fight at Guerrero, several of the detachments took up the lead in the chase for Villa. The overall tactical plan remained unchanged. Units would continue moving south along parallel avenues of march in order to provide each other mutual support and to limit Villa's east-west movement, thereby trapping him between the columns.

The soldiers of the Punitive Expedition continued to operate in a harsh environment. Nights continued to be extremely cold, especially in the 5,000 to 7,000-foot elevations of the Sierra Madres. Snow, sand, and hail storms were common. Troopers generally left Colonia Dublan with five to eight days of rations, but were soon forced to live off the land due to the limited resupply system. Officers often reached into their own pockets to purchase food and other supplies from the natives, since most Mexicans would not accept promissory notes from the U.S. government. Motor transport could not keep up with the cavalry columns operating in difficult

terrain, and pack mules were used to carry what few supplies reached the cavalrymen. Riding and marching along steep, narrow trails through the mountains was tricky and dangerous, and the rapid rate of movement often denied the soldiers much needed sleep.

The first of the four detachments to depart Colonia Dublan was the 2nd Squadron, 13th Cavalry, commanded by Major Elmer Lindsley. His orders were to take up positions just west of the Cumbre Pass, ascertain the whereabouts of Villa, and block any Villista forces attempting to move west toward Sonora. If Villa was located by elements of the 10th Cavalry, Lindsley was to support their operations. This is precisely what Lindsley did upon hearing of Villa's sighting in Guerrero. He moved his squadron onto the Barbicora Plateau, where he immediately received new orders from Pershing via airplane that his unit was to remain in place as a reserve.

The second detachment to depart Colonia Dublan consisted of a provisional squadron composed of troops from the 10th and 13th Cavalry Regiments, commanded by Major Frank Tompkins, the officer who had led the pursuit of Villa's raiders immediately following the Columbus raid. Tompkins's orders were to proceed south along the Santa Maria River in support of the 7th Cavalry's operations. Over the next two weeks, Tompkins's squadron conducted several patrols in the area west of the river, but failed to intercept any of Villa's band fleeing northeastward after the Guerrero fight. By the beginning of April, Pershing had moved down the Santa Maria River Valley via automobile in order to command his columns more easily, and Tompkins's squadron, headquartered at Namiquipa, provided escorts up and down the valley.

The third and fourth detachments were each composed of a provisional squadron from the 11th Cavalry and were commanded by Major Robert L. Howze and Lieutenant Colonel Henry T. Allen, respectively. Howze departed Colonia Dublan in late March, followed a few days later by Allen. Both squadrons proceeded down the Santa Maria River Valley. Once past Tompkins's

squadron at Namiquipa, they began scouting the area westward toward the Mexican National Railroad, looking for various Villa sympathizers suspected of being in the area.

On 30 March, Pershing established a forward headquarters at San Geronimo. He was now moving about by automobile and personally giving orders to his columns, no longer relying on aircraft or the unreliable telegraph lines south from Colonia Dublan. A small entourage that accompanied him in three automobiles included his aide, Lieutenant George S. Patton Jr., several correspondents, and a handful of riflemen for security. The general was now ready to press the search for Villa southward toward Parral. With Lindsley in reserve, the three remaining detachments under Tompkins, Howze, and Allen, along with Colonel Brown's column from the 10th Cavalry, proceeded southward.

Meanwhile in Washington, Secretary Baker gave an optimistic update of the Mexican situation to President Wilson on 10 April.<sup>47</sup> Baker stated that Carranza's army in Chihuahua was cooperating with the Punitive Expedition. This was based on a report received from Funston, indicating that a friendly meeting was about to take place between Pershing and two Mexican generals, General Luis Herrera and General Eulalio Gutiérrez. Each of these Mexican officers commanded sizable federal forces in Chihuahua, numbering in the thousands. Baker also told Wilson that Villa was wounded and in Parral, and that, with Herrera's and Gutiérrez's cooperation, Pershing's cavalrymen would capture Villa in the next few days. The Secretary's report added that some of the logistical problems of the expedition were being temporarily solved by the use of Mexican railroads.

Upon reading Baker's report, Wilson probably thought the situation in Mexico was improving, when the opposite was actually the case. Pershing did meet with the two Mexican generals shortly thereafter, but concluded at the end of the meeting that no cooperation would be forthcoming.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, any temporary solutions to the expedition's logistical problems

through the use of Mexican railroads did not last long. Within the week, Carrancista forces were actively obstructing American use of the railway lines once again.<sup>49</sup>

Pershing decided to search for Villa in southern Chihuahua by sending Tompkins's squadron from the 13th Cavalry as the expedition's spearhead toward Parral. He supplied Tompkins with extra rations, equipment, and soldiers. Colonel Brown's 10th Cavalry would move southward protecting Tompkins's eastern flank, while Howze's squadron would do the same on the western flank. On 8 April, Pershing moved his headquarters from San Geronimo to Satevo, approximately 300 miles south of the U.S. border.

Tompkins and the 13th Cavalry moved south on 4 April. They stopped at several villages along the way to ascertain the whereabouts of Villa and to rest the men and horses. As he neared Parral, Tompkins met Captain Antonio Mesa, a Carrancista officer who, in a spirit of cooperation, invited him to enter Parral. Mesa said he would post a guide outside of Parral to guide the Americans into town, and he rode ahead of the 13th Cavalry to coordinate their resupply and provisions.

Upon arriving at the outskirts of Parral, Tompkins found no guide as Mesa had indicated. Still thinking that Mesa had coordinated his friendly reception, he entered the town with his command and was eventually escorted by a Carrancista soldier to the office of the federal commander, General Ismael Lozano. Tompkins had hoped to remain in town and gather provisions, but Lozano was irritated by the presence of the Americans and disavowed any knowledge of Mesa's efforts at cooperation. As the discussion between the two continued, a crowd began surrounding Tompkins's troopers in the street below. Lozano agreed to provision the squadron, but recommended the Americans depart immediately to occupy a position outside of town. The general would escort the Americans, and they would be provisioned there.

Parral was a city of nearly 20,000 persons, and the crowd surrounding the Americans grew larger and more hostile during the hour it took Lozano to get himself ready to ride. The people appeared to be incited by a few individuals, one of whom was Elsa Griensen de Alvarado, a German national by birth who was married to an ardent Villa supporter. She whipped the crowd into a frenzy by "screaming insults at the Americans and berating the Mexicans for allowing the vile gringos to defile their city."<sup>50</sup> Whether she was acting as a Mexican patriot or a German sympathizer is unknown, but the fact of the matter is she played a significant role in rallying the crowd against the Americans.

The cavalrymen departed Parral under Lozano's escort. The crowd, now an angry mob, followed, shouting "Viva Villa" and "Viva Mexico!" Lozano led the Americans to a location a short distance out of town and stopped, directing Tompkins to wait there for supplies. Tompkins did not like the location the Mexican general had picked. It was a bowl, surrounded by hills on all sides and virtually impossible to defend.

Anticipating trouble, Tompkins ordered one of his troops to occupy the hills to the west of the squadron, while he attempted to arrange a change of location with Lozano. It was too late; the mob that had followed the Americans out of town began shooting at the rear of Tompkins's column.<sup>51</sup> Shortly thereafter, a Mexican Army unit occupied the hills to the east of Tompkins's position, and other federal troops occupied the southern hills. The Americans were soon surrounded by several hundred Mexican regulars. So far the U.S. cavalrymen had sustained no casualties and had not fired at the civilian mob.

For reasons unclear, the Carrancistas opened fire on the squadron. With the mob shooting at the Americans, and the Americans rapidly moving about the area taking up defensive positions, the scene presented to the Carrancistas was surely one of confusion. The Mexicans may have incorrectly believed they were acting in self defense. In any case, there was still no evidence that

Carranza had authorized his generals to attack Pershing's troops. Therefore, the attack on Tompkins's squadron was either the result of a preplanned event orchestrated by Lozano, or an impromptu reaction by one of his subordinates. With this in mind it is interesting to note that, although Lozano was surprised by Tompkins's arrival in Parral, he took an hour to get ready to escort the Americans out of town, which was certainly enough time to issue any necessary orders to his subordinates. It should also be noted that the Mexicans did not begin firing on the Americans until after Lozano left Tompkins's side. There is no way to be sure, but in the end the Carrancistas blamed the whole affair not on the Americans, but on the actions of the angry mob.<sup>52</sup>

One U.S. trooper was killed instantly. With the squadron beginning to sustain even more casualties, Tompkins decided to move quickly northeastward and head for Santa Cruz de Villegas, a more defensible position in Tompkins's mind, about twenty miles away. Two hundred Mexican cavalry pursued on a parallel course, but the terrain soon demanded that they abandon their route and pursue the squadron from the rear. Tompkins immediately took advantage of this situation. After passing over a ridge, out of sight of the pursuing column, he dismounted about twenty cavalrymen as a rear guard to set up an ambush. As the Mexican cavalry raced over the top of the ridge, the American marksmen poured a withering fire into their formation, killing over forty in just a few minutes, according to Tompkins.<sup>53</sup> The Mexicans were severely routed and their pursuit was halted, but after some reorganization, they slowly followed the 13th Cavalry's trail to Santa Cruz. Tompkins entered the town, set up defensive positions, and sent riders out to bring help from Colonel Brown and the 10th Cavalry. The Mexicans took up threatening positions overlooking the town.

A detachment from the 10th Cavalry was encamped about eight miles from Santa Cruz when Tompkins's riders approached at a gallop. Once in camp, they told an officer that the 13th Cavalry was surrounded at Santa Cruz and needed help. Major Young, who led the saber charge

at Aguas Calientes, rapidly led his detachment to Santa Cruz. Colonel Brown and the remainder of the Buffalo Soldiers closed on Santa Cruz shortly thereafter, followed over the next two days by Howze's 11th Cavalry Squadron and elements of the 7th Cavalry. A sizable force concentrated at Santa Cruz prepared to defend against any attacks by Carranza's troops, and Colonel Brown assumed overall command. Pershing's tactical plan to use mutually supporting columns had allowed Tompkins to be reinforced quickly when trouble began. Villa, on the other hand, had yet to be captured.

Along with the two score Mexican dead, the Battle of Parral left two Americans dead, six wounded, and one missing.<sup>54</sup> Americans had previously fought two engagements with Villa's bandits, but for the first time during the expedition, American troops had now become involved in direct combat action with Mexican government soldiers. If there had been any question as to whether Carranza's army would cooperate or not with the Punitive Expedition, the Parral fight erased any doubt. It was now clear that Carranza's troops operating in Chihuahua opposed any U.S. military intervention in their districts. This event, coupled with Cano's treachery, the uncooperative work of Mexicans hired to operate U.S. troop trains, and the unsympathetic attitude of the local inhabitants toward the expedition, convinced many of Pershing's officers that not a single person in Chihuahua could be trusted.

Word of the engagement reached Pershing at his headquarters in Satevo two days later on 14 April. Pershing's immediate concern was for the safety of his troops. With all three detachments, along with the 10th Cavalry, safe at Santa Cruz for the time being, the general set about to reestablish communications with his base at Colonia Dublan. His command could not string telegraph lines as far south as Satevo, and he had left his Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Cabell, in Colonia Dublan to communicate with Funston. Upon arriving at Namiquipa, Pershing was able to notify Cabell of the Parral incident. Cabell, using the giant radio tower at Casas

Grandes, quickly relayed the message to El Paso, where it was telegraphed to Funston in San Antonio, Texas.

Funston telegraphed Washington regarding the Parral fight and provided his recommendations for further action.<sup>55</sup> The Department Commander now positively concluded that Carranza's forces were openly hostile to American troops in Mexico. He also believed that Dodd would have captured Villa at Guerrero if not for the treachery and misleading actions of Mexican officers such as Colonel Cano. Furthermore, Funston pointed out that Mexican troops were moving north through Sonora, possibly to intercept Pershing's lines of communications. In light of all this, Funston recommended taking drastic actions. He requested permission for his command to seize not only the Mexican railroads, but the capital of Chihuahua City and the entire State of Chihuahua in which American forces were operating. General Scott added his recommendation to call out the National Guard, positioning it along the border to demonstrate American resolve.

Wilson and Baker were shocked by Funston's report and recommendation, since approving them would mean all out war with Mexico.<sup>56</sup> Wilson seized on an opportunity that came to his attention in a long message sent to Lansing from the Mexican Foreign Office a few days earlier. In essence, the Mexican government stated that the reciprocal agreement was not yet in effect, but that it was willing to discuss the few remaining details leading to its implementation.<sup>57</sup> Since Carranza had several times demanded the withdrawal of the Punitive Expedition and refused to negotiate on that matter, Wilson suggested that a meeting between General Scott and the Mexican Minister of War, General Obregón, might produce results acceptable to both the United States and Mexico.

Meanwhile, Pershing had decided, because of logistical constraints, to move Colonel Brown and the regiments at Santa Cruz to a position farther north. Brown's men were over 300

miles south of the U.S. border. Before leaving, Brown accepted an invitation to confer with Carranza Generals Herrera and Lozano. Both men suggested Brown move his troops north, farther away from Parral. When Brown, at that point unaware of his commander's intent, refused to move except upon orders from Pershing, Herrera became more agitated and declared that American troops would be permitted to move from Santa Cruz in only one direction, and that was north. A confrontation was avoided when Pershing's orders to move north arrived. The cavalry regiments at Santa Cruz began moving toward San Antonio, Chihuahua on 21 April.

With this action, thirty-seven days after the Punitive Expedition crossed the border into Mexico, the active pursuit of Pancho Villa came to an end. Villa was still at large, and his sympathizers were still a threat, but the cohesive organization of his bands was largely broken up. Though the active pursuit of Villa had ended, the operations of the Punitive Expedition were far from over. It would remain in Mexico for nearly ten more months. The senior generals and politicians would become players in a long drama on the diplomatic stage, and Pershing's cavalrymen would fight several more battles, including the most deadly one of the expedition.

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925), 480.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Johnson, The Punitive Expedition, A Military, Diplomatic, and Political History of Pershing's Chase After Pancho Villa (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, Inc., 1964), 87.

<sup>3</sup>Foreign Relations, 1916, 481.

<sup>4</sup>Arthur S. Link, ed., The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Volume 36, 27 January-8 May 1916 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 283.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 283.

<sup>6</sup>Arthur S. Link, Confusions and Crises (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 207-208.

<sup>7</sup>Foreign Relations, 1916, 483.

<sup>8</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 285.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 295.

<sup>10</sup>U.S. War Department, Report by Major General John J. Pershing, Commanding, of the Punitive Expedition, Colonia Dublan, Mexico, 10 October 1916, 1.

<sup>11</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 287.

<sup>12</sup>Anthony K. Knopp, "Public Opinion and the Punitive Expedition," in The War of 1898 and U.S. Interventions 1898-1934, ed. Benjamin R. Beede (New York & London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1994), 449.

<sup>13</sup>John S. D. Eisenhower, Intervention! (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 1993), 292.

<sup>14</sup>Mark T. Gilderhus, Diplomacy and Revolution, U.S. - Mexican Relations Under Wilson and Carranza (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1977), 51.

<sup>15</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 309.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 314.

<sup>17</sup>Link, Confusions and Crises, 211.

<sup>18</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 314.

<sup>19</sup>Pershing Report, 5.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>21</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 313.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 317.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 313.

<sup>24</sup>The words in italics were General Scott's recommended addition to Wilson's original text, subsequently approved by the President.

<sup>25</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 323.

<sup>26</sup>Frank Tompkins, Chasing Villa (Harrisburg, PA: The Military Service Publishing Co., 1934), 77.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 75.

<sup>28</sup>Foreign Relations, 1916, 493.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 495.

<sup>30</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 338.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 343.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 352.

<sup>33</sup>Clarence Clendenen, Blood on the Border (London: The Macmillan Co. Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1969), 252.

<sup>34</sup>The 10th Cavalry, known as the Buffalo Soldiers, was formed shortly after the American Civil War and was composed entirely of African-American soldiers, led almost exclusively by white officers with the exception of MAJ Charles P. Young, an African-American and West Point graduate who led one of the formations during the Punitive Expedition.

<sup>35</sup>Eisenhower, 246.

<sup>36</sup>Pershing Report, 9.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>40</sup>Tompkins, 147.

<sup>41</sup>Pershing Report, 14.

<sup>42</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 397.

<sup>43</sup>Don M. Coerver, "Motorized Supply for the Punitive Expedition," in The War of 1898 and U.S. Interventions 1898-1934, ed. Benjamin R. Beede (New York & London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1994), 352.

<sup>44</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 353.

<sup>45</sup>Timothy A. Warnock, "Air Operations in the Punitive Operation," in The War of 1898 and U.S. Interventions 1898-1934, ed. Benjamin R. Beede (New York & London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1994), 8.

<sup>46</sup>Pershing Report, p. 16.

<sup>47</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 456.

<sup>48</sup>Pershing Report, 20.

<sup>49</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 501.

<sup>50</sup>Clendenen. 261.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 261.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 269.

<sup>53</sup>Pershing Report, 21.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>55</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 501.

<sup>56</sup>Link, Confusions and Crises, 285.

<sup>57</sup>Foreign Relations, 1916, 514.

## CHAPTER 3

### END OF THE ACTIVE PURSUIT

#### Consolidation and the Scott-Obregón Talks

As Pershing's flying cavalry columns began concentrating near San Antonio, Chihuahua, political and diplomatic events underway in Washington dramatically altered the character of operations of the Punitive Expedition. On 22 April, General Scott sent a letter to Baker outlining three possible courses of action for the expedition.<sup>1</sup> The first involved continuing the pursuit by pushing American forces farther south to effect Villa's capture. This would involve the seizure of Mexican railroads to ensure logistical support over such an extended area and would require additional troops to participate in the campaign. The Chief of Staff did not recommend this action since he did not think it would result in Villa's capture. The bandit could go "clear to Yucatan."<sup>2</sup> Scott's second course of action involved pulling Pershing's forces completely out of Mexico, since Villa was in hiding and the chances of finding him in a friendly population appeared slim. But Scott did not support a complete withdrawal because he was still concerned with demonstrating American resolve to defend the border. Finally, Scott recommended pulling the expedition back to defensible ground in the vicinity of Colonia Dublan where it could still protect the border, but with less risk to the lives of the soldiers. In light of the Parral incident, the Chief of Staff reasoned that maintaining American forces south of Casas Grandes would become an increasingly dangerous proposition.

Scott suggested that American troops could be maintained in Colonia Dublan almost indefinitely. Ample supplies of water and forage were located there, and the position could easily

be supplied from logistical bases in Columbus and El Paso. Both the Chief of Staff and Baker also realized that maintaining the expedition in Dublan would be an incentive for the Carranza government to capture Villa itself in order to secure a U.S. withdrawal. President Wilson had recently suggested this option to Baker, but Baker had wanted to get Scott's recommendation before submitting a final plan to the President. Wilson not only approved the plan to consolidate at Colonia Dublan, but he also approved a meeting between Scott and Obregón, at a place to be mutually agreed upon, to work out future military aspects of the campaign.

Meanwhile, the cavalry columns and detachments that had pursued Villa into southern Chihuahua completed their concentration at San Antonio by the end of April. During this time, Colonel Dodd and a large contingent of the 7th Cavalry had continued to pursue Villa sympathizers in an area just west of San Antonio in the Sierra Madres. On 22 April, Dodd had succeeded in cornering a large group of Villistas led by Candelario Cervantes in the small town of Tomochic. In the battle that followed, Dodd's command killed over thirty of Cervantes's men and scattered the remaining 150-200 until they ceased to be a cohesive fighting force.<sup>3</sup> Once again, Dodd had succeeded in breaking up one of Villa's bands.

As Funston and Pershing continued to consolidate and reorganize their forces in Chihuahua, the State Department tried to convince Carranza of the benefits of a Scott-Obregón meeting. Carranza was cool to the idea, but did not stop Obregón from departing Mexico City for El Paso on 24 April.<sup>4</sup> The Mexican Minister of War reached El Paso on 28 April and left word with the American Consulate that he would meet Scott in Ciudad Juárez at the Hotel Aguana.

Scott arrived in El Paso on the 30th and immediately contacted Obregón to coordinate the meeting. At the suggestion of Wilson and Baker, Funston would also attend, much to Scott's satisfaction. As was Wilson's custom, he issued formal instructions to the War Department regarding the discussions. The War Department interpreted and forwarded Wilson's instructions to

Scott. The agenda of the meeting was to be strictly along military lines: Scott had no authority to make political decisions. In summation, his instructions read as follows.

You will meet with General Obregón and discuss with him the future military operations of our forces in Mexico on the following basis:

- 1) The Government of the United States earnestly desires to avoid anything which has the appearance of intervention in the domestic affairs of the Republic of Mexico.
- 2) It [The United States] desires to cooperate with the de facto Government of that Republic [Mexico], and its pursuit of the bandit Villa and his bands is for the sole purpose of removing a menace to the common security and the friendly relations of the two Republics.
- 3) So long as he [Villa] remains at large and is able to mislead large numbers of his fellow citizens into attacks like that at Columbus, the danger exists of American public opinion being irritated to the point of requiring general intervention.
- 4) The American military commanders will respond instantly to all invitations for cooperation with forces of the Mexican Government.
- 5) If it be deemed better American troops can be detained in the northern part of the State of Chihuahua while the forces of the Mexican Government drive Villa and his associates towards the north, in this way enabling the American troops to aid in his ultimate capture.
- 6) You will proceed with full powers to discuss and agree upon all points raised by either of the conferees which relate purely to the military situation including questions of lines of supply and use of railways.
- 7) If, on the other hand, his [Obregón's] attitude should be a peremptory command for the immediate withdrawal of the American troops across the border, General Scott and General Funston should say that that question is a diplomatic question and should be worked out through the agency of the respective Department of Foreign Affairs of the two Republics.<sup>5</sup>

Obregón, accompanied by General Jacinto Treviño, other officers, and several members of the Mexican press, and Scott, accompanied only by Funston, met as planned on 30 April. The talks were friendly and lasted approximately two hours. The Americans put forth their case for cooperation with the Mexican military operating in Chihuahua and stressed their desire to obtain the full use of Mexican railways to support American troops. Obregón, however, refused to discuss any compromises or matters of cooperation. The Mexicans continued to insist on the immediate withdrawal of American troops from Mexico. Obregón insisted that Villa was either dead or completely incapable of posing further threats, and since several hundred of his followers were either killed or dispersed, there was no need for American troops to continue pursuing his capture. The talks ended amicably, but were deadlocked concerning any possible military compromises or solution.<sup>6</sup>

Scott and Obregón informed their respective governments of the situation following their first meeting and agreed to meet again upon receipt of further instructions. Scott, in his message to Baker, recommended that the United States remain in Mexico until Villa's death or capture was verified and that in no case should American troops be pulled further north than Casas Grandes.<sup>7</sup> The Wilson Administration agreed with the general's recommendation and gave Scott guidance for further negotiations. Scott was authorized to say that American forces would be withdrawn from Mexico as soon as the United States was assured of the safety of its common border.<sup>8</sup> This statement, however, left a lot of room for interpretation and, in reality, could have sustained the Punitive Expedition in Mexico indefinitely.

As Scott waited to hear from Obregón regarding another meeting, Funston received word of an extremely dangerous situation developing in Sonora. General Anulfo Gómez, commander of a large Mexican garrison in Agua Prieta, had received orders from one of his superiors to "dispose your troops that they shall be in a position to cut off American expeditionary forces now in Chihuahua. The action must be sudden and will take place after the Scott-Obregón conference . . . unless there is absolute withdrawal of American troops."<sup>9</sup> An American officer at Douglas, Arizona, just across the border from Agua Prieta, received word of these orders from an informant and forwarded the information to Funston. It is unclear where these orders originated, and there is no evidence directly linking Carranza with the instructions. What is clear, however, is that Gómez received these instructions from one of Carranza's generals in northern Mexico. Adding credibility to this report, Scott received what he termed "inside information" from a reliable source in Ciudad Juárez that a senior Mexican general in Chihuahua, whose identity remained a mystery, had been ordered to "crush or annihilate the American forces in Mexico in case of nonwithdrawal."<sup>10</sup> Once again, it was impossible to determine where these orders originated. Nonetheless, the Americans took the situation seriously.

Upon receipt of these two messages, Funston became extremely concerned about the safety of American troops. Pershing had pulled his forces northward from Parral, but the cavalry columns were still concentrated in and around San Antonio and Satevo. Though this concentration of cavalry was more than capable of defending itself against any immediate threat from the Mexican army, Pershing's lines of communications were directly threatened by Mexican forces already in Chihuahua, or by federal troops possibly getting ready to move east from Sonora.

As Funston and Pershing accelerated their plans to consolidate the expedition in northern Chihuahua, Scott received a message from Obregón requesting another meeting, this time in El Paso. Scott quickly agreed, and the two met at the Paso del Norte Hotel. This time, Obregón was not accompanied by other Mexican officers or the Mexican press, and judged by the results of this meeting, this may have allowed him greater leeway in the negotiations. Scott, on the other hand, had managed to avoid any contact with the press during his first meeting in Juárez, but was now literally pursued by American reporters as he headed toward the Paso del Norte. In the process of avoiding any interviews, Scott commandeered a laundry truck, which dropped him off at the service entrance to the hotel. He ran down the corridors, quickly reached Obregón's room, ran inside, and slammed the door shut.<sup>11</sup> The two generals then began their talks, accompanied only by a single interpreter provided by Obregón.

Over the next twelve hours, the generals hammered out an agreement governing the operations of Mexican and American military forces in Chihuahua and Sonora. In essence, Scott agreed to withdraw the Punitive Expedition "gradually" beginning immediately. This decision may appear to have been out of Scott's purview to make, but the key word was "gradual," and Scott specifically declined to set a definite date for the complete withdrawal of the expedition. In return for this small concession, Obregón agreed to halt any preparations aimed at threatening Pershing's lines of communications by Mexican forces in Sonora and to carry out a vigorous pursuit of any

bandits threatening Americans living along the border.<sup>12</sup> The agreement was submitted to both Wilson and Carranza for approval.

Baker and Lansing conferred on the Scott-Obregón agreement on 3 May and recommended approval to Wilson.<sup>13</sup> The President readily acceded after which the Administration eagerly awaited Carranza's reply. Wilson released a statement for the press indicating that an agreement had been reached between Scott and Obregón regarding military operations in Chihuahua, but he withheld publication of the actual terms until such time as Carranza approved the accord.<sup>14</sup> The Mexican President, however, was slow to react and allowed the proposal to sit on his desk with no action being taken. Obregón would later report to Scott in El Paso that Carranza was not inclined to approve the agreement since no definite date had been set for the complete withdrawal of American troops.<sup>15</sup>

The Scott-Obregón agreement, although resulting in no diplomatic solutions, did serve to avoid the sort of military escalation in Chihuahua that could have led to war between the United States and Mexico. This retreat from the brink would prove to be short-lived, but for now, the threat from Sonora was checked, and on 5 May, Pershing continued to move his troops northward. Scott's and Funston's plan recommending gradual withdrawal had no provision for removing Pershing from Mexico, and the Punitive Expedition slowly moved into positions in order to implement Pershing's new plan aimed at breaking up Villa's bands.

#### Policing the Districts

By the end of April, Pershing believed that Villa's bands were essentially broken up and scattered throughout Chihuahua; as a result, the Punitive Expedition was no longer pursuing a cohesive force.<sup>16</sup> Still, Pershing believed that Villa's men continued to pose a threat to Americans living along the border. He was convinced that Villa was still in Chihuahua, somewhere in hiding, and that his scattered bands were operating throughout the state under subordinate rogue leaders.<sup>17</sup>

Pershing therefore decided to divide the state of Chihuahua into five districts, each to be patrolled by a cavalry regiment with infantry and artillery in support. (see fig. 4 and appendix B. Organization of the Districts.) The district commanders were to patrol their districts with small, fast-moving cavalry columns designed to break up the remaining isolated bands by using the element of surprise.

With the commanding general's approval, Lieutenant Colonel Cabell issued General Orders No. 28 on 29 April.<sup>18</sup> These orders authorized the district commanders to organize their own means of gathering intelligence, as well as any Mexican nationals needed as guides or for any other services. Commanders were ordered to take the initiative and act on any information that would possibly lead to the capture of any Villa forces that had taken part in the Columbus raid, and to keep the commanding general informed of both friendly and Villa movements. Pershing further noted that the district boundaries were merely general guidelines indicating the territory to be covered and were not intended to limit pursuits or the gathering of information. Additionally, district commanders were to position their headquarters in such a manner as to facilitate matters of logistics.

General Orders No. 28 also contained new guidance pertaining to unit actions in the event of attack. As previously mentioned, Pershing's original instructions from Washington stated that "if actually attacked, they [American troops] will of course defend themselves by all means at their command, but in no event must they attack or become the aggressor with any such body of troops."<sup>19</sup> Though the general's orders stressed the importance of cooperating with Mexican troops and respecting the sovereignty of a nation with which the United States was not at war, his orders also stated the following.

Experience so far has taught, however, that our troops are always in more or less danger of being attacked, not only by hostile followers of Villa, but even by others who profess friendship, and precaution must be taken accordingly. In case of unprovoked attack, the officer in command will, without hesitation, take the most vigorous measures at his disposal, to

administer severe punishment to the offenders, bearing in mind that any other course is likely to be construed as a confession of weakness.<sup>20</sup>

These instructions differed somewhat from the original War Department instructions. An officer was now required to administer severe punishment vigorously upon any attacking force, as opposed to merely taking any means necessary to ensure self-defense. Pershing, like the rest of his command, appeared to trust no one in Chihuahua.

Before all the regiments had occupied their districts, Pershing received word while at San Antonio that a large Villista band was in Cusi, threatening a small Carrancista garrison. Two representatives from Cusi approached Pershing with this information and requested his assistance in protecting the town. Since rumors had recently been circulating that this Villista band was planning to attack the Americans at San Antonio, Pershing decided to take action. He ordered Major Howze and six cavalry troops, along with a machine-gun platoon, to proceed west to Cusi and move against the Villista band.

Cusi was only a few miles west of San Antonio, and Howze arrived there in short order only to discover that the Villistas had moved to Ojos Azules, approximately thirty-five miles distant. Howze secured, as it turned out, reliable Mexican guides in Cusi and continued moving toward the Villistas' suspected location. He arrived at Ojos Azules early in the morning of 5 May and took the bandits completely by surprise. The 11th Cavalry routed and dispersed the band, killing nearly eighty Villistas in the process without the loss of a single American soldier.<sup>21</sup>

Shortly after the fight at Ojos Azules, the cavalry regiments finished occupying their districts and began patrolling the countryside in search of the remnants of Villa's bands. But just as Pershing's operations to police the districts began to take effect in earnest, an incident occurred across the border in Texas that would once again change the character of the Punitive Expedition's military operations, as well as having far-reaching effects on the diplomatic front.

On 6 May, a band of Mexican raiders crossed the Rio Grande near Glen Springs, Texas, a small community in the Big Bend region of the state and nearly three-hundred miles southeast of El Paso. The raiders attacked a small garrison of the 14th Cavalry and proceeded into town, where they stole supplies and kidnapped a store owner and his young son before crossing back into Mexico. A handful of Americans were killed and wounded in the raid. Since this area of Texas was so isolated, it took two days for the news to reach El Paso, where Funston immediately ordered troops from the 8th and 14th Cavalry Regiments, organized under the command of Major George Langhorne, to pursue the raiders into Mexico.

It took several more days for Langhorne's provisional squadron to reach Glen Springs from his base in West Texas and to cross the Rio Grande, the result of which was a sort of "Punitive Expedition in miniature." Langhorne's command succeeded in rescuing the store owner and his son and recovered some of the supplies stolen by the raiders. In the process, the squadron remained in Mexico for two weeks. Using the same tactics as Pershing, Langhorne sent out fast moving cavalry columns to capture and break up the raiding party. Largely successful, Langhorne returned to the United States on 26 May.<sup>22</sup>

The scale of the Glen Springs raid was small in comparison with Columbus. Quite possibly, the raid was not planned and conducted by Villa or his followers. It did, however, arouse excitement in the U.S. Congress and within the Texas Governor's office.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, Wilson, remembering previous requests from Funston and Scott, called up the National Guard, ordering 4,500 guardsmen from the states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas to man the border. Furthermore, he ordered Baker to reinforce garrisons along the border with an additional 4,000 regulars.<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, Carranza had denounced this new incursion into Mexican territory by Langhorne's cavalry and had demanded their removal. At the same time, he denounced the Scott-

Obregón agreement and ordered the immediate withdrawal of the Punitive Expedition. By 11 May, war once again appeared imminent, but the Wilson Administration quickly regained an optimistic outlook when two reports reached Washington on 12 May. Scott had been meeting with Obregón the day before. The talks had broken off, but Scott released a statement to the press indicating that he and the Mexican Minister of War were still on friendly terms, as were their respective governments.<sup>25</sup> The second report was from Pershing, who informed his superiors that no Mexican troops were threatening his forces and that he saw no indication that they would in the near future. The situation, according to Pershing, appeared calm.

Nonetheless, Funston strongly suggested to Pershing that he consider pulling his troops farther north, possibly concentrating his entire force at Colonia Dublan. Pershing assured Funston that he had the situation in control. He saw no reason to pull his entire command back to Colonia Dublan, but acquiesced in part to Funston's recommendation by removing a majority of his strength to the vicinity of Namiquipa. Policing of the districts continued cautiously over the next few weeks, but on a less grandiose scale.

It was during this time that Pershing's aide, 1st Lieutenant George S. Patton, Jr., had his famous gunfight with Villistas near Rubio. Patton had set out to arrange for a supply of feed for the expedition's horses when he was fired upon from a ranch house. In the fight that followed, three of the bandits were killed. Patton personally killed two of the men with his pistol, strapped the bodies to the hood of his car, and proceeded back to Pershing's headquarters to present his trophies. One of the dead bandits was identified as Julio Cárdenas, one of Villa's long-time generals. Much to Patton's satisfaction, a newspaper reporter traveling with Pershing's headquarters gave wide publicity to the story.

Small actions of this sort continued throughout the month of May, but as June approached, the situation was again becoming extremely dangerous for the Punitive Expedition. Baker

informed Wilson that large numbers of Mexican troops were forming in Chihuahua and that their intentions were unknown. A force of nearly 22,000 soldiers under the command of General Jacinto Treviño had moved up from the south and occupied positions in Chihuahua City. A second concentration of Mexican troops was taking place in northern Sonora. In response to this situation, Pershing further consolidated his forces in order to provide a better defense, and he moved his headquarters to Colonia Dublan.

Tension between American and Mexican commands continued to build. During the first two weeks of June, the Punitive Expedition consolidated at Colonia Dublan, but Pershing also sent out numerous cavalry columns throughout Chihuahua. The cavalry were not only to ascertain the whereabouts of Villa bands, but were to also report information on Mexican federal troops now occupying the state in abundance. On 16 June, Treviño, under orders from Carranza, sent a warning to Pershing, informing him that the Mexican government had ordered him to attack any American forces in Chihuahua that moved in any direction except north from their current positions.<sup>26</sup> Carranza's personal involvement in this ultimatum was made clear when the First Chief released the news to the general public. Pershing quickly responded, informing Treviño that the United States government had

placed no restrictions upon the movement of American forces. I shall therefore use my own judgment as to when and in what direction I shall move my forces in pursuit of bandits or in seeking information regarding bandits. If, under these circumstances, the Mexican forces attack any of my columns, the responsibility for the consequences will lie with the Mexican government.<sup>27</sup>

Upon hearing of Treviño's threat, Wilson ordered the National Guard of all states to mobilize for national duty to protect the border in case of war with Mexico. By 4 July, in a generally well-conducted mobilization and movement, 112,000 guardsmen of fourteen states arrived at four major assembly areas in the southwest: San Antonio, Brownsville, and El Paso, all in Texas, and Douglas, Arizona.<sup>28</sup> The troops were quickly dispersed to numerous border stations

from Yuma to Brownsville, with the majority of them remaining in place for the next eight months. Two regiments, the 1st New Mexico Infantry and the 2nd Massachusetts Infantry, were assigned to the Punitive Expedition. These two units provided security for the expedition's logistical base at Columbus. Although no National Guard unit would enter Mexico, or repel any border raids from Mexico into the United States, several individuals from the 1st New Mexico and the 2nd Massachusetts crossed the border while accompanying motor transport columns.<sup>29</sup>

Immediately following his reply to Treviño, Pershing received reports of a third Mexican force of 10,000 men concentrating at Villa Ahumada, a small town on the rail line between Juárez and Chihuahua City, approximately eighty miles east of Colonia Dublan. This force nearly equaled the total number of American troops deployed in Chihuahua, and Pershing was rightfully concerned. He requested that Major Evans provide him one troop of cavalry to reconnoiter the area around Villa Ahumada. Evans sent Troop C, 10th Cavalry, commanded by Captain Charles T. Boyd, who reported personally to Pershing for instructions on 17 June. Boyd would set out on what would become the single most notorious incident of the Punitive Expedition, bringing relations between the United States and Mexico close to the breaking point.

#### Carrizal

Boyd set out from Dublan to reconnoiter the area around Villa Ahumada. In Pershing's own words after the fact, Boyd's instructions were as follows.

Take your troop and reconnoiter in the direction of Ahumada and obtain as much information as you can regarding the forces there. This is a reconnaissance only, and you will not be expected to fight. In fact, I want you to avoid a fight if possible. Do not allow yourself to be surprised by superior numbers. But if wantonly attacked, use your own judgment as to what you shall do, having due regard for your command. I then went on to tell Captain Boyd of General Treviño's order to attack our troops if we should send them west, east, or south. And further told him that it would not be wise to go in any place garrisoned by Carrancista troops.<sup>30</sup>

The day after Boyd departed Dublan, Pershing sent a similar set of orders to Captain Lewis Morey, commander of K Troop, 10th Cavalry, stationed about fifty miles north of Boyd's point of

departure.<sup>31</sup> For some unknown reason Boyd was not informed of Morey's orders, but the two troops linked up at a place called Santo Domingo Ranch, about ten miles west of Carrizal and twenty miles southwest of their destination of Ahumada. Being the senior officer, Boyd assumed command of both troops. The units were greatly understrength. Besides Boyd and Morey, only one other officer, First Lieutenant Henry Adair of C Troop, and eighty enlisted men filled out the command.

Boyd decided to hold a meeting on the evening of 20 June to discuss his plans for the next morning. Two civilians were present, including Boyd's American guide, Lemuel Spillsbury, and the foreman of the Santo Domingo Ranch, W. P. McCabe. The captain put forth his plan to ride through Carrizal on his way to reconnoiter Ahumada. Because of the tense situation and large build-up of Carrancista forces, both civilians, along with Captain Morey, advised Boyd to bypass Carrizal on his way to Ahumada. The captain would hear none of it and stuck to his plans to ride straight through the center of the town.

The two cavalry troops departed the ranch for Carrizal before daybreak on the morning of 21 June. As they approached the town, Boyd noticed several hundred Mexican soldiers deployed in battle formation blocking the approach. (see fig. 5.) He placed his command in defensive positions and sent Spillsbury to request Mexican permission to proceed through the town. Spillsbury returned a short time later with the local Mexican commander, General Félix Gómez.

Boyd, Spillsbury, and Gómez held a conference near the American positions. Gómez informed Boyd that he was under orders from General Treviño to stop American troops moving in any direction but north. Carrizal was northeast of the 10th Cavalry's current position. Gómez departed after an hour and a half of discussion, failing to offer any compromise. Boyd was frustrated and asked Spillsbury's advice once again. The guide once more recommended bypassing the town to the north. The captain rejected this advice and gave the order to move

toward Carrizal. Troop C would move through the Mexican lines and on through the south corner of the town, with Troop K moving on the right, protecting Troop C's right flank.<sup>32</sup>

The Buffalo Soldiers began their movement mounted, then dismounted into lines of skirmishers approximately three-hundred yards from the Mexican lines. As the Americans approached another one-hundred yards on foot, the Mexican infantry opened fire. The Americans responded in kind, but Troop K was immediately pinned down by the volume of Mexican rifle fire and was quickly forced to move toward the northwest to avoid increasing casualties. Troop C continued to advance for a few more minutes until Mexican cavalry suddenly appeared on their left flank, charging into the rear of Boyd's position and scattering many of Troop C's horses.<sup>33</sup>

The Buffalo Soldiers put up a valiant fight, but unable to hold their positions under the intense fire, they began breaking up and scattering into small parties heading back toward Santo Domingo Ranch. The Americans were vastly outnumbered. Adding to the confusion was the fact that by now all of their officers were either dead or wounded. Boyd was killed instantly by a bullet through the head. Lieutenant Adair was wounded and died a few minutes after the battle began. Captain Morey was seriously wounded. Ten Americans were killed and twenty-three were taken prisoner, while the Mexican dead included General Gómez. The Battle of Carrizal was a disaster for Pershing's command.

Fortunately, the Mexicans failed to launch a proper pursuit, and the fifty or so Americans fleeing from Carrizal were able to make their way to Santo Domingo Ranch and eventually back to Colonia Dublan. Nonetheless, it took them several days to do so, and Pershing, having been out of communications with both Boyd and Morey since they left Dublan, was slow to gather the particulars of the Carrizal fight. The Mexicans, however, were quick to release news of what they considered to be a great victory. Funston, who was back in San Antonio, Texas, first heard about

the incident from Mexican news sources. He fired off a haphazardly worded message to Pershing on 22 June which is interesting to note.

Why in the name of God do I hear nothing of you the whole country has known for ten hours through Mexican sources that a considerable force of your command was apparently defeated yesterday with heavy loss at Carrizal? Under existing order to you why were they so far from your line being at such distance that I assume that now nearly twenty-four hours after affair news has not reached you who was responsible for what was on its face seems to have been a terrible blunder?<sup>34</sup>

As Pershing slowly gathered information on the Battle of Carrizal, Funston sent a message to the War Department suggesting that the Carrizal fight was an ambush by Mexican troops on unsuspecting Americans. He suggested that the Americans were once again the victims of a ruse, the Mexicans employing a flag of truce to lure the Americans into a trap.<sup>35</sup> This early report was based solely on information Pershing had obtained from stragglers arriving back at Colonia Dublan. It would be several more days before the wounded Morey arrived to tell the real story.

With these initial reports, Wilson and Lansing were under the impression that the Mexican government was at fault for the tragedy at Carrizal. Lansing sent an ultimatum to the Mexican Foreign Minister demanding the release of the American prisoners, stating that the United States would not wait very long for a reply.<sup>36</sup> Numerous anti-American demonstrations were held in cities throughout Mexico, and Baker sent instructions to Funston to be carried out only in the event of war.<sup>37</sup> Funston was to plan to reinforce Pershing's command with an additional 10,000 men, bringing the total to around 20,000. Upon orders from Washington, he was to establish several large armies, upwards of 20,000 men each, along the border, seize all the international bridges across the Rio Grande, and prepare to seize all Mexican border towns to push Mexican regulars away from the U.S. border.

Funston prepared for the worse. He ordered Pershing to consolidate his entire force north of El Valle, thereby concentrating the Punitive Expedition within a fifty-mile radius of Colonia Dublan. He also notified General George Bell, commander of American troops in El Paso, to be

prepared to join Pershing in a campaign to seize northern Chihuahua. Bell would attack and seize Juárez, while Pershing seized Villa Ahumada. Their commands would then join and attack and seize Chihuahua City.

As war between the United States and Mexico appeared imminent, Pershing began piecing together the real story behind the Battle of Carrizal. After reading Morey's report on the incident, he became convinced that the whole affair was not a Mexican trap, but was in fact the result of Boyd's arrogance and misreading of the situation. Pershing forwarded Morey's report to the War Department, and by the beginning of July, the Wilson Administration was also convinced that Carrizal was the fault of Captain Boyd.<sup>38</sup> In light of this realization, Lansing sent a memorandum to the President on 3 July outlining a proposal for creating a joint commission between the United States and Mexico for the purpose of working toward a resolution of the problems along the border.

Wilson was enthusiastic about creating a joint commission in order to avoid war, but it was the Mexicans who acted first. On 4 July, Carranza ordered General Treviño to release the Americans taken prisoner at Carrizal. Treviño sent the Americans north to El Paso where they were promptly released. On the same day, the Mexican Foreign Office sent a message to Lansing suggesting that the differences between the two countries could be worked out through mediation by several Latin American countries who had offered their assistance.<sup>39</sup> Wilson quickly authorized his Secretary of State to set up some form of negotiations with the Mexicans, and Lansing replied to the Mexican Foreign Office that the United States would be disposed to consider any plan put forward by Mexico to resolve the border problems.

#### The Crisis Subsides

Rather than accept mediation by a third party, the United States preferred direct negotiations with Mexico and thus put forth a recommendation for creating a joint commission.

The Mexican Foreign Office replied favorably and recommended that each government appoint three members to sit on the commission. Additionally, the Mexicans proposed that the commission consider as its primary topics the arrangement of a reciprocal agreement concerning hot pursuits across the common border and the withdrawal of the Punitive Expedition from Chihuahua.<sup>40</sup>

Negotiations regarding the proposed agenda for the joint commission continued for several weeks throughout July. The United States was interested in expanding the agenda to include a variety of issues that it believed would improve overall relations between the two countries.<sup>41</sup> Carranza, however, was suspicious that the Wilson Administration would use the commission to seek the cession of Mexican territory or to press claims against the Mexican government for monetary reimbursement of property lost by Americans in Mexico. Only when the United States assured Mexico on 1 August that these two topics would not be considered did the First Chief agree to convening the commission.

On 4 August, Carranza appointed three members to represent his government on the joint commission: Luis Cabrera, Ignacio Bonillas, and Alberto J. Pani.<sup>42</sup> Each of these representatives was a civilian with close personal ties to the First Chief. Carranza gave them a great deal of leeway in dealing with the Americans, but reserved the right to approve or disapprove personally all tentative agreements.<sup>43</sup>

Wilson was slow to name the American members of the commission. It was the end of August before he finally appointed Dr. John R. Mott, a missionary and personal friend, George Gray, a lawyer, and Franklin K. Lane, the Secretary of the Interior.<sup>44</sup> The commission finally assembled in New York City on 4 September and quickly moved to New London, Connecticut, to begin discussions. The Mexicans continued to stand firm on their call for the immediate withdrawal of the Punitive Expedition. The Americans refused to withdraw Pershing until the

Mexicans could provide the same security to Americans living along the border as U.S troops were providing in northern Mexico.

The joint commission quickly reached a stalemate. Future deliberations would continue to be characterized by the aforementioned arguments. Numerous proposals and counter-proposals were put forth by each delegation, only to be rejected for one reason or another. Reams of paper outlining proposed agreements in the most excruciating detail passed back and forth between the commissioners and their respective governments. The commission continued to meet on and off throughout the remainder of 1916 and into 1917 without ever reaching an agreement. Undersecretary of State Frank Polk was skeptical from the beginning as to whether the joint commission could ever produce a diplomatic solution to the problems with Mexico, but he suggested that dealing with Carranza patiently through the commission was preferable to war, especially since American diplomatic matters with Germany over unrestricted submarine warfare were continuing to worsen.<sup>45</sup>

As the joint commission was beginning its long discussions, the Punitive Expedition remained in Mexico and settled down to routine life in and around its base camp at Colonia Dublan. Almost all supplies reaching the expedition now arrived via the railroad south from El Paso and Juárez. Always subject to being cut off, this single supply line was critical to the Americans, since the rainy season had begun to take hold in July and August. The resulting flash floods and poor road conditions severely restricted motor transport movement south out of Columbus. The troops had remained consolidated at Colonia Dublan and El Valle for so long that that they had built adobe huts to live in. Pershing became concerned about sanitary conditions and anticipated the outbreak of epidemics should the limited water sources become infested by increasing numbers of roaming cattle. Consequently, he requested tens of thousands of dollars in

expenditures to improve the health and welfare of his men, specifically requesting screened kitchens due to the increasing mosquito and fly populations.

Though Pershing kept his men busy each day by planning and conducting rigorous and effective training drills, as well as undertaking general measures to defend the camp, many of the men sought their nightly entertainment at the woman's stockade of the 11th Cavalry. The regiment's provost marshal, Captain Julien E. Gaujot, had gathered together a number of prostitutes from El Paso, and with Pershing's approval, he ran the stockade for the enhancement of troop morale. In light of the prevailing conditions at Colonia Dublan, Funston recommended that the expedition be pulled out of Mexico.

Funston sent a telegram to the War Department on 17 August reminding Baker and Scott that the original instructions for the expedition on 10 March stated that "the work of these troops will be regarded as finished as soon as Villa and his band or bands are known to be broken up."<sup>46</sup> Funston added that, "It seems certain that Villa [‘s] band has been broken up. Our forces have been withdrawn to Dublan and El Valle and are simply remaining there without any visible prospect for future operations."<sup>47</sup> The general recommended that the expedition be pulled out of Mexico and its troops distributed along the border to provide any necessary protection to American citizens.

The Administration rejected the recommendation. Wilson was relying on his delegation to the joint commission to make any necessary recommendations regarding withdrawal, and the commissioners were tying the withdrawal question to other issues having nothing to do with Pershing in Mexico.<sup>48</sup> These other issues included obtaining protection of American business interests and property in Mexico, resolving minor border disputes along the Rio Grande, and the still distinct possibility of establishing a claims commission. It appeared that the Punitive Expedition had become, in Pershing's words, "something of a club that the Administration can use

over the Mexican government.<sup>49</sup> The Americans were to remain in their base camp and pursue no active operations in Mexico.

The military situation in Chihuahua remained calm throughout the months of July and August, but just as September began, the unexpected occurred. Pancho Villa suddenly burst upon the scene once again. He had recovered from his wounds and succeeded in gathering a few hundred followers to accompany him on yet another adventure. He attacked the small Carrancista garrison at Satevo, inflicting several casualties and routing the remaining federal troops from the town. On 15 September, Villa entered Chihuahua City. Though General Treviño and several thousand federal troops still garrisoned the city, Villa managed to free hundreds of prisoners from the local penitentiary and persuade over a thousand of Treviño's soldiers to join his cause. He moved leisurely about town for nearly twenty-four hours, mocking any possible threat from Treviño, and departed the following morning. He had in his possession most of Treviño's artillery, escorted by federal troops who had deserted, and over sixteen automobiles loaded with ammunition and small arms.<sup>50</sup>

During the remainder of September and on through October, Villa conducted a series of raids against Carrancista garrisons in Chihuahua, while Pershing's forces remained in defensive positions near Colonia Dublan. In late October, Pershing notified Funston that Villa appeared in control of the whole of northern Chihuahua, with Carranza's troops unable to check his movements. Funston notified the War Department and recommended that, should U.S. troops take up active operations again in Chihuahua, Pershing be authorized to seize Chihuahua City. Funston also ordered General Bell to plan on seizing Juárez in the event of hostilities, thereby securing use of the Mexican railroad and a line of communication to Chihuahua City.<sup>51</sup>

Funston reasoned that chasing Villa would only result in his moving south to avoid capture by the Americans, and that in order to pursue Villa deep into Mexican territory, Chihuahua City

was required as a base of operations. Baker considered the general's request but denied him any permission to implement any type of active operations. The Punitive Expedition was to remain in place, and the Secretary reiterated his instructions clarifying Pershing's orders as of 27 October.

No change should be made in General Pershing's instructions as they now are, which are that he is not to move south or east further than is necessary to protect himself by his patrol, nor in any event to attack Villa nor Chihuahua City, even if Villa should capture it. His present instructions, in other words, authorize him to do anything necessary for the protection of his own force and to resist any attack upon him but not change the situation by any movement on his initiative.<sup>52</sup>

Capturing Villa was no longer the intent of the Wilson Administration. Pershing was to "mark time" while the joint commission did its work.

On 23 November, Villa attacked the federal garrison in Chihuahua City. Unlike his foray into town back in September, he met staunch opposition from the Carrancistas this time. Five days of heavy urban fighting ensued before Villa emerged victorious. Immediately following the fall of Chihuahua City, General Bell received word from Carrancistas in Juárez that Villa's next target was that city.<sup>53</sup> Juárez was not attacked, but Villa continued gaining ground throughout northern Chihuahua. By early December, Funston was again recommending to the War Department that Pershing be allowed to crush Villa once and for all with a swift and decisive military operation.<sup>54</sup>

The Wilson Administration declined to intervene because the joint commission was still at the table slowly concluding its business, and because Villa had suddenly headed south, turning up in Torreón and continuing his raiding against Carrancista garrisons in Durango. Villa's raiding continued sporadically for several months, but by the end of 1916, Mexican federal troops had regained complete control of the state of Chihuahua. Villa's last adventure soon petered out and he would never again rise to the level of power he once knew.

### The Withdrawal

The withdrawal of the Punitive Expedition was inglorious and uneventful. On 24 December 1916, the joint commission concluded another one of its inconsequential agreements. The commission agreed that the expedition would be withdrawn from Mexico within forty days so long as the conditions warranted it. In other words, nothing was decided. The American members of the commission returned to Washington, and on 3 January 1917, they recommended to President Wilson that he withdraw the expedition, due to its lack of active operations and the inability of the both delegations to come to a diplomatic conclusion. The commission officially dissolved on 17 January.

Wilson considered the recommendation and ordered the War department to withdraw the troops. Villa had reemerged for a brief time but was posing no direct threat to the border. Carranza was busy formulating a new Mexican Constitution that would eventually be ratified and go into effect later that year, and the United States was becoming increasingly embroiled in antagonistic relations with Germany. On 18 January, the War Department notified General Funston to withdraw the expedition. Pershing's troops had not conducted an active military operation since late June, 1916.

The Punitive Expedition departed Colonia Dublan on 30 January. It moved directly north to Palomas, Chihuahua, where the troops were consolidated for an organized march across the border into the United States. On 5 February 1917, the last American soldier left Mexico. On horseback and on foot, the troopers of the expedition marched through Columbus and past General Pershing, who reviewed their parade from the bandstand in the center of town. The Punitive Expedition was no more.

<sup>1</sup>Arthur S. Link, ed., The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Volume 36, 27 January-8 May 1916 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 528.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 528.

<sup>3</sup>Frank Tompkins, Chasing Villa (Harrisburg, PA: The Military Service Publishing Co., 1934), 182.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925), 528.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 530-532.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 533.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 534.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 534.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 537.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 536.

<sup>11</sup>John S. D. Eisenhower, Intervention! (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 1993), 285.

<sup>12</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 592.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 603-605.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 604.

<sup>15</sup>Foreign Relations 1916, 543.

<sup>16</sup>U.S. War Department, Report by Major General John J. Pershing, Commanding, of the Punitive Expedition, Colonia Dublan, Mexico, 10 October 1916, 25.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>19</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 36, 323.

<sup>20</sup>Pershing Report, 25.

<sup>21</sup>Tompkins, 192.

<sup>22</sup>Clarence Clendenen, Blood on the Border (London: The Macmillan Co. Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1969), 279-281.

<sup>23</sup>Arthur S. Link, Confusions and Crises (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 291.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 291.

<sup>25</sup>Arthur S. Link, ed., The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Volume 37, 9 May-7 August 1916 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 22.

<sup>26</sup>Pershing Report, 29-30.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>28</sup>Clendenen, 290.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 296.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 303.

<sup>31</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 37, 319.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 317.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 318.

<sup>34</sup>Eisenhower, 298.

<sup>35</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 37, 280.

<sup>36</sup>Foreign Relations 1916, 595.

<sup>37</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 37, 283.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 348.

<sup>39</sup>Foreign Relations 1916, 599.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 601.

<sup>41</sup>Mark T. Gilderhus, Diplomacy and Revolution, U.S. Mexican Relations under Wilson and Carranza (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1977), 48.

<sup>42</sup>Foreign Relations 1916, 606.

<sup>43</sup>Gilderhus, 48.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>46</sup>Arthur S. Link, ed., The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Volume 38, 7 August-19 November 1916 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 44.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>48</sup>Gilderhus, 49.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>50</sup>Foreign Relations 1916, 609.

<sup>51</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 38, 547.

<sup>52</sup>Link, Wilson Papers Volume 38, 546.

<sup>53</sup>Arthur S. Link, ed., The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Volume 40, 20 November 1916-23 January 1917 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 109.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 202.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Almost immediately following the withdrawal of the Punitive Expedition, events in Mexico nearly vanished from the headlines, as the United States became increasingly involved with the situation in Europe. On 2 April 1917 Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany. Congress declared war on 6 April, and the entire administration, along with the country, geared up for the mobilization and deployment of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) to France.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the War Department and the Army had little time to reflect on recent operations in Mexico.

As a result, many writers and historians who have chosen to examine the significance of the Punitive Expedition on American military history have tended to focus on two important aspects. First, the expedition provided a valuable training ground for officers and troops who later served in World War I. Second, the expedition provided the Army the opportunity to test its ability to mobilize the newly reorganized National Guard on a large scale. Both of these aspects of the Punitive Expedition were, without a doubt, invaluable contributions to the successful effort of the United States Army in World War I. Aside from these two important aspects, the Punitive Expedition also offers up several additional insights into the conduct of military operations. When examined from the standpoint of the Army's 1990s warfighting doctrine, the expedition provides a unique case study that brings to light several key insights regarding the conduct of political-military operations and, as doctrine currently labels them, "operations other than war."

The United States was not at war with Mexico in 1916, yet the U.S. government entered Mexico with a combat-equipped force of nearly 10,000 men and conducted military operations on foreign soil for nearly a year. The Punitive Expedition embodied many of the characteristics of an operation other than war, and several insights into the conduct of this operation can be determined when examining the expedition in light of the principles of objective, unity of effort, legitimacy, perseverance, restraint, and security.<sup>2</sup>

Was the Punitive Expedition a success? This is the question most often asked, and the answer is yes, when the short-term military objective of the operation is taken into consideration. General Scott summed it up best at the conclusion of the expedition when he stated that

Pershing made a complete success in the accomplishment of his orders from the War Department point of view but the State Department, by putting out erroneous information, spoiled the effect in the minds of the public. Neither the State Department nor the Press, moreover, has ever corrected this unfortunate impression.<sup>3</sup>

Scott was referring to the fact that the War Department had directed Pershing to break up and disperse Villa's bands, while the State Department continued to indicate that the sole purpose of the operation was the capture of Villa. Though Villa was never captured, Pershing's forces did succeed in significantly breaking up his bands in such encounters as those at Guerrero, Aguas Calientes, Tomochic, and Ojos Azules. By the beginning of 1917, Villa never again posed a serious threat to the U.S. border, and even in Chihuahua, his power waned significantly following his brief comeback in late 1916.

This military objective was a clearly defined, decisive, and achievable goal. The real question is, why wasn't the Punitive Expedition withdrawn once this goal was attained? John S.D. Eisenhower suggests that the middle of May 1916 would have been the optimal time to withdraw the expedition.<sup>4</sup> All the major engagements with the Villistas were finished, and most of the damage the expedition would inflict upon Villa's bands was completed by this time. Another opportune time to have withdrawn the troops occurred in August 1916, when Funston

recommended the expedition's withdrawal due to its inactivity and poor prospects for active operations in the future. The Wilson Administration's decision to retain Pershing's troops in Mexico after May, and especially August, can partly be explained by a change in the expedition's objective during that time.

The expedition had originally been designed as a strike or raid to break up Villa's bands, but by the summer of 1916, it was being cast in the mode of a show of force, designed to aid in the achievement of political objectives by the joint commission. Some have argued that Pershing's forces were continuing to protect the U.S. border during the summer and fall of 1916, but it should be remembered that Funston informed the War Department in August that American citizens could just as easily have been protected by withdrawing the expedition and dispersing its troops along the border. In the end, the administration's decision to use the expedition as a show of force to influence the proceedings of the joint commission proved to be a failure, especially when judged by the inconclusive results of that commission.

Nonetheless, at the tactical and operational levels, Pershing was able to deal with an ever-changing military situation that forced him continuously to change his methods of operations. He began the expedition by employing a series of fast-moving cavalry columns in a chase for Villa, a chase that reached hundreds of miles into Mexico. As his lines of communications became overextended, and the Mexican army attacked his cavalry at Parral, he abandoned the active pursuit for Villa. Replacing that operation, Pershing divided Chihuahua into five districts, each to be patrolled by a cavalry regiment in a further attempt to break up Villa's bands. As the Carrancista threat increased, he began consolidating his forces in northern Chihuahua, while continuing to send out reconnaissance patrols. After the battle at Carrizal he completely consolidated his forces and instituted a vigorous training regimen until the expedition was withdrawn.

Pershing's operations today might be characterized as having involved complete changes of mission, but in actuality, at least through May 1916, his objective remained focused on breaking up Villa's bands. Pershing's continuous restructuring of his method of operations to the changing tactical situation was indicative of his ability to operate in a highly complex and dynamic military operation. The real change in Pershing's mission occurred after May, and particularly after August, when his troops remained in Mexico as a show of force, under instructions not to pursue any Villista bands or conduct active military operations. By then, the objectives of the Punitive Expedition had become unclear and indecisive.

Never unclear or indecisive was the functioning of the chain of command throughout the entire expedition. Pershing was not only the commander of all American forces in Chihuahua, but also commanded all the logistical support units in Columbus, New Mexico. National Guard units that were mobilized in June and assigned to support the supply functions in Columbus were placed directly under Pershing's command. As a result, Funston maintained the expedition's unity of effort by combining both maneuver and logistical assets under Pershing's command. Pershing thus had the capability of organizing his entire overall effort toward achieving his military objective.

In addition, the chain of command from Pershing to the President was clearly defined. Pershing's immediate superior was the commander of the Southern Department, Major General Funston. Funston reported directly to the Chief of Staff, General Scott, who in turn reported to the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker. Baker of course, reported to the President.

Unlike declared war, where the diplomacy has largely broken down, military operations other than war are generally accompanied by intensive diplomatic efforts. This was the case during the Punitive Expedition. The State Department and the Mexican Foreign Office carried on a nearly continuous dialogue, eventually culminating in the formation of the joint commission.

However, as one would expect, no member of the State Department was in Pershing's chain of command. He reported to no ambassadors, special envoys, or other American political figures in Chihuahua. State Department matters were integrated into affairs with Mexico at the cabinet level, and Pershing received his orders and guidance directly from the War Department through Funston. In the case of the Punitive Expedition, at least, this arrangement worked well toward successfully conducting military operations on the ground.

A much greater challenge to Pershing arose through his attempts to gain and maintain legitimacy for his mission, defined as the willing acceptance of the people of Chihuahua toward his presence in Mexico. This proved to be one of the more complex issues the expedition faced, and it can be divided into two parts. First, Pershing sought the acceptance and cooperation of the civilian population toward the conduct of his operations. Second, by order of President Wilson, Pershing was to take no actions detrimental to the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Mexican government.

Carranza's government and the local civilian populace were often at odds in Chihuahua. Villa had been an enemy of Carranza's government since 1915, and Villa's demise would certainly have been welcomed by the First Chief. On the other hand, Chihuahua was Villa's primary base of public support, and many people in the state were sympathetic to his cause. As a result, neither the local inhabitants nor the Carrancistas would fully cooperate with the Americans.

The local inhabitants were generally inclined to cooperate with Pershing's troops only for an immediate cash payment. Even then, their sympathies toward Villa often precluded their enthusiastic support, and those who were not ardent supporters of Villa still resented the presence of American troops, in what most Mexicans perceived as an invasion of their sovereign territory. Consequently, many local inhabitants who appeared to cooperate with the Punitive Expedition were actually engaged in misleading or otherwise hampering the operation. Furthermore, issuing

to the Mexicans what they rightfully perceived as worthless receipts for goods and supplies did nothing to establish legitimacy with the local population.

The Parral incident aside, it is to the Americans' and Pershing's credit that large-scale, organized, and violent opposition to the expedition never materialized. On occasion, American patrols were sniped at, but these incidents generally proved to be the work of the Villistas. Though often uncooperative, the civilian population did not generally engage in direct attacks on American troops. Pershing's decision not to occupy Mexican towns and his complete adherence to the Administration's guidance prohibiting the seizure of Mexican property contributed heavily to this success. The Parral incident is the one major exception, but the point is that this type of activity did not spread throughout Chihuahua. It should also be remembered that Pershing's decision to consolidate his forces in San Antonio following the Parral incident were based more on logistical constraints than any threat from the citizens of Parral. However, the Parral incident did, once and for all, indicate to Pershing that the Carrancistas and the Mexican army were not going to cooperate at all with his efforts.

A common enemy did not necessarily make for allies in the case of the Punitive Expedition. Though the Carrancista leaders sought Villa's downfall, they were not inclined to cooperate with the Americans to achieve this end. They took more pride in Mexican sovereignty and nationalism than in any effort to assist Pershing. Within the ranks of the Mexican army however, the common soldier was sometimes prone to shift his loyalties from Carranza to Villa. This was especially evident upon Villa's arrival in Chihuahua City in September 1916 and his departure the next day with thousands of former Carrancista soldiers in his ranks. Loyalties often shifted in Chihuahua, but there was one constant. Regardless of whether one was a Carrancista, a Villista, or a local citizen with no formal political ties, all remained uncooperative toward the Americans.

In the end, the Carranza government retained legitimacy in Chihuahua as well as throughout Mexico. In fact, the Punitive Expedition may have actually assisted in this process. The large Mexican armies sent into and around Chihuahua during the summer of 1916 to counter Pershing's moves also had the effect of consolidating greater Carrancista power in northern Mexico. The battle at Carrizal may also have aided Carranza's legitimacy. The Carrancistas depicted the battle as a great victory over the Americans, and this played well among the generally anti-American population. Furthermore, Pershing's adherence to Administration policy requiring him to respect Mexican sovereignty also aided the Carrancistas in retaining their legitimacy.

The one major exception by the Punitive Expedition to respecting Mexican sovereignty occurred at Carrizal. Here, the absence of restraint by one junior officer in the command, Captain Boyd, had dramatic effects on military operations as well as diplomatic efforts in Mexico. Boyd's actions led to the complete consolidation of the expedition in northern Chihuahua and the end of all active military operations by Pershing until the expedition was withdrawn. The disaster at Carrizal, along with the initial belief by the Americans that the incident must have been a Mexican ambush, also precipitated a diplomatic crisis that nearly led to war, but instead led to the creation of the joint commission. In addition, as previously mentioned, the entire objective of the Punitive Expedition changed after Carrizal.

Why Boyd decided to attack the Mexican position at Carrizal may never be fully understood, but it certainly could not have resulted from a lack of clear guidance. The instructions issued to Pershing by the Wilson Administration on 16 March to guide the activities of the expedition--what we would today call the rules of engagement--were quite clear. American troops were not to attack or become the aggressor toward any body of Mexican troops. Additionally, Wilson's guidance authorized the troops to take up any means necessary to protect themselves if attacked. Following the Parral incident, Pershing added clarification to this rule of self defense

when he determined “any means necessary” could include decisive offensive actions directed against any body of troops attacking American soldiers. Still, Boyd completely miscalculated the situation at Carrizal. Here was an officer who should have completely understood his mission and the “rules of engagement” following a personal briefing by the commanding general, yet still failed to adhere to his instructions. It must be concluded that Boyd’s actions were a result of a complete disregard for orders.

The same is not true of Major Tompkins’s actions at Parral. His decisions in that incident indicated a thorough knowledge and understanding of the constraints under which he operated. He also displayed a great deal of restraint by not ordering his troops to shoot into the mob that followed his squadron out of town and that began shooting at the rear of his column. Instead, Tompkins took precautions to protect his force by establishing a rear guard and seeking positional advantage on the ground. When attacked by Mexican federal troops, Tompkins, instead of squandering his men’s lives in an attempt to attack the Mexicans and inflict damage on those who were taking his unit under fire, quickly moved his squadron out of the area toward more defensible terrain at Santa Cruz. He continued to show restraint until Mexican cavalry pursued his squadron toward Santa Cruz, whereupon he was forced to protect his force by establishing an ambush and inflicting significant damage on the pursuing Mexicans. His actions stand in stark contrast to those of Captain Boyd at Carrizal.

Nonetheless, throughout the entire operation, Pershing always maintained the security of his forces. This was paramount in his thinking as he never permitted hostile forces to gain an advantage. His operations involving the columns and detachments in active pursuit of Villa were always designed to allow the units to concentrate in the event of their being threatened by any faction. At the end of the active pursuit he consolidated his forces just enough to provide proper security, while still moving toward his objective of breaking up Villa’s bands. As large Mexican

armies began arriving in Chihuahua and Sonora. Pershing further consolidated his troops to provide an adequate defense. Furthermore, he never restricted his troops' right to self defense. As mentioned beforehand, he actually strengthened his officers' ability to protect their units by authorizing them to attack decisively any force that initiated hostile actions.

Pershing was also forced to deal with a number of other issues that complicated his operations in Mexico, one of which involved the press. His relations with the press in Chihuahua were generally friendly. Several correspondents accompanied his headquarters throughout the expedition and wrote favorable reports highlighting the exploits of his soldiers, the story of Lieutenant Patton being a case in point. The real problems were centered around the press in the United States, and with Mexican national news sources. Hearst and Pulitzer newspapers in the United States took a hard line on Wilson's policy in Mexico, even going so far as to call for war and intervention.<sup>5</sup> This had the effect of further galvanizing Carrancista efforts aimed at forcing the expedition to withdraw. Mexican news sources also added to Pershing's headaches. When the Mexicans instantly wired news of the Carrizal incident to telegraph stations throughout the United States and Mexico, Pershing's superiors, as well as the general public, heard about the whole affair before the general did. Needless to say, Pershing found himself in an unenviable situation.

In conclusion, an examination of the Punitive Expedition brings to light several key insights into the conduct of operations other than war. Once begun, the military operation became one characterized by ever-changing circumstances, further complicated by the local inhabitants, government officials, Mexican army commanders, the press, and logistical problems. Pershing adapted to the dynamic situation as reflected in his changing methods of operations. What started out as a chase to capture Villa gradually transformed into one of maintaining a show of force in northern Mexico to achieve diplomatic goals.

The causes of conflict rarely have a clear beginning or end. Such is the case with the circumstances surrounding the Punitive Expedition. Villa's raid on Columbus was the trigger that started Pershing's nearly eleven-month stay in Chihuahua, but many of the problems along the U.S. border were rooted in the events of the Mexican Revolution. The Punitive Expedition did solve the immediate problem of breaking up Villa's bands and providing security to the southwest border for a short time, but after May 1916, the expedition appeared to wither on the vine, as did Villa's power in northern Mexico. Attempts by the Wilson Administration to use Pershing's troops as bargaining chips in the larger diplomatic arena failed. Revolutionary affairs in Mexico were started by Mexicans and eventually ended by Mexicans, regardless of American attempts to intervene.

Many have considered the operations of the Punitive Expedition to have been an ill-conceived idea from the beginning.<sup>6</sup> It should be remembered that the American public demanded action following the Columbus raid. Possibly, the United States could have organized a much smaller force, but the force composition was left up to the military officers, in particular Funston, who deemed a sizable force was necessary to maintain its own security while operating in Mexico. However, it might be possible to criticize Pershing for extending his operations so far into Mexico, severely exceeding his logistical capabilities. In hindsight, the expedition should probably not have proceeded farther south than Ojos Azules, and should almost certainly have been pulled back into the United States by early May 1916. After that date, the expedition accomplished little if anything, except almost starting a war over the Carrizal incident. There is absolutely no sound reason for having maintained the expedition at Colonia Dublan throughout the summer and fall of 1916 and into the new year.

Others have suggested that capturing Villa in Chihuahua was virtually impossible. There is no doubt that, in avoiding capture, Villa had an immense advantage over the Americans. He

was operating in friendly country with access to numerous resources and literally thousands of hiding places in the rugged Sierra Madre Mountains. Still, the Americans came close at Guerrero, and Pershing did succeed in capturing twenty-one Villistas believed to have taken part in the Columbus raid. They were subsequently sent back to New Mexico for trial.

Finally, it should be noted that a war with Mexico could easily have been the result of this expedition. It was only through the restraints placed upon the operation by the Wilson Administration, and the ability of the officers and men of the expedition to operate within those constraints, that war was avoided. It is to their credit that the last significant campaign involving U.S. horse cavalry did not get too far out of hand, otherwise the Punitive Expedition might not be the obscure piece of American history that it is today.

<sup>1</sup>Funston died suddenly of a heart attack two weeks after the Punitive Expedition's withdrawal. Pershing became the commander of the Southern Department in February 1917, and subsequently the commander of the AEF. Their old adversaries in Mexico all met violent deaths. Carranza was assassinated in 1920. Villa was murdered in Parral in 1923 in a disagreement over gambling debts. Obregón became President of Mexico and was subsequently assassinated by a religious zealot in 1928.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1993), 13-3 through 13-4.

<sup>3</sup>Robert S. Thomas and Inez V. Allen, The Mexican Punitive Expedition Under Pershing (Washington: Monograph by the War Histories Division of the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1 May 1954), V-9.

<sup>4</sup>John S.D. Eisenhower, Intervention! (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1993), 290.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 292.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., xv.

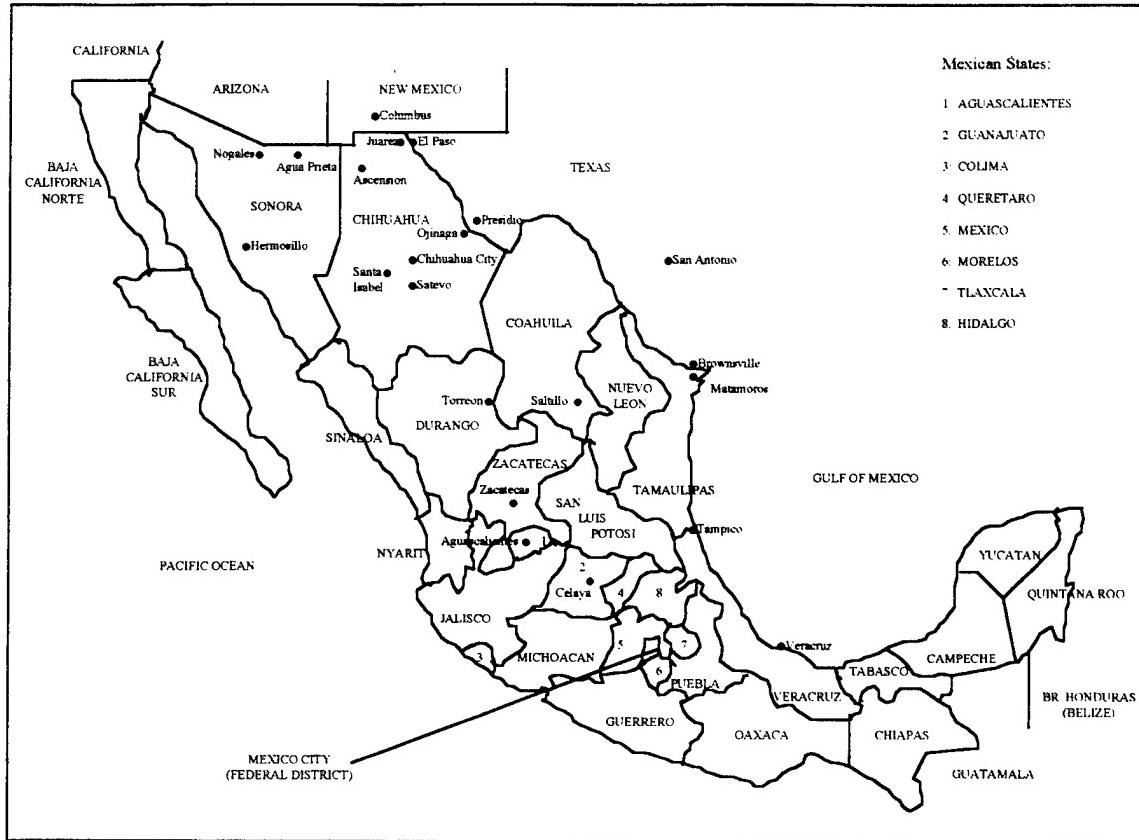


Figure 1. Mexico During the Revolution

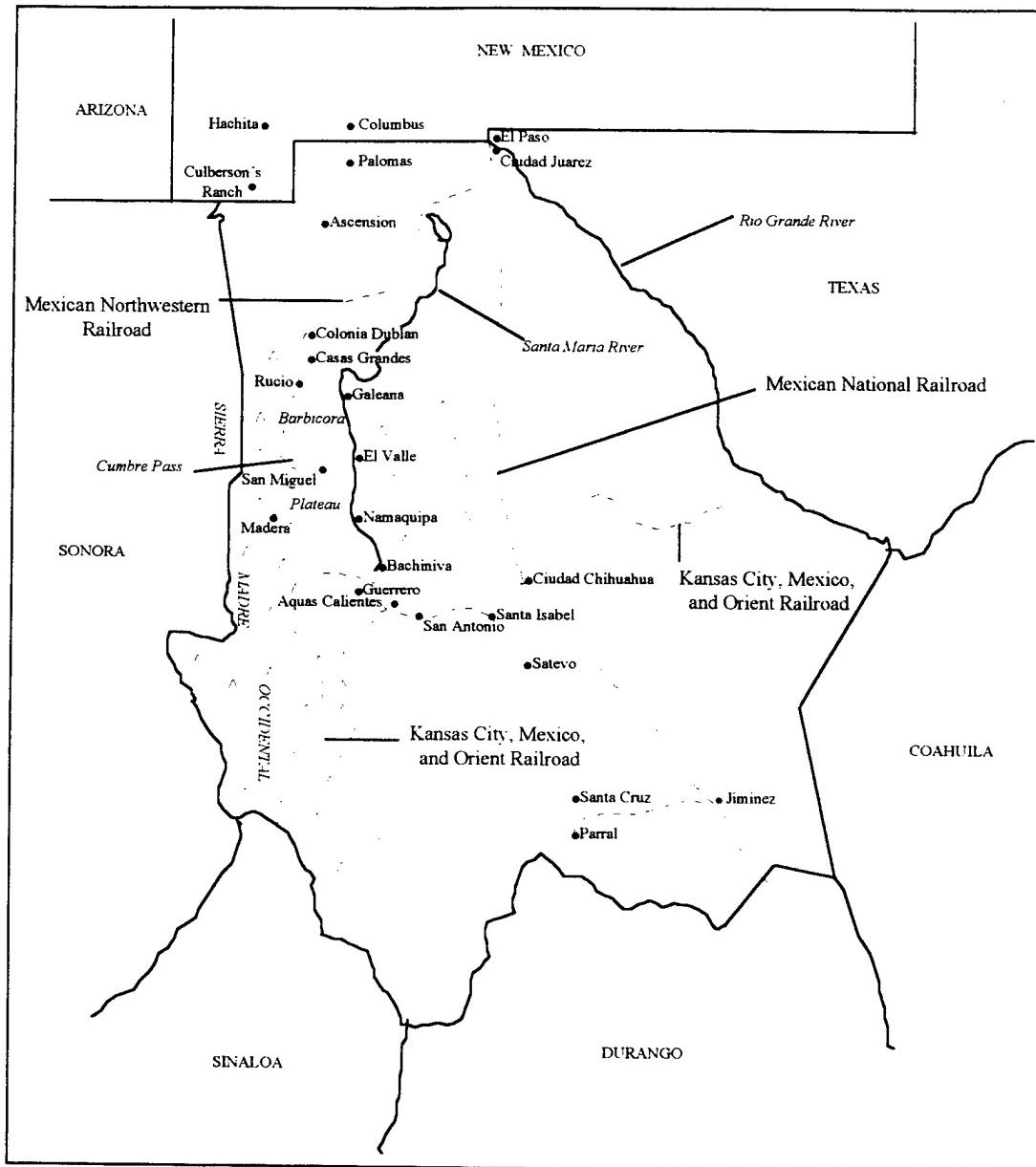


Figure 2. Chihuahua, Mexico: Principal Railroads 1916

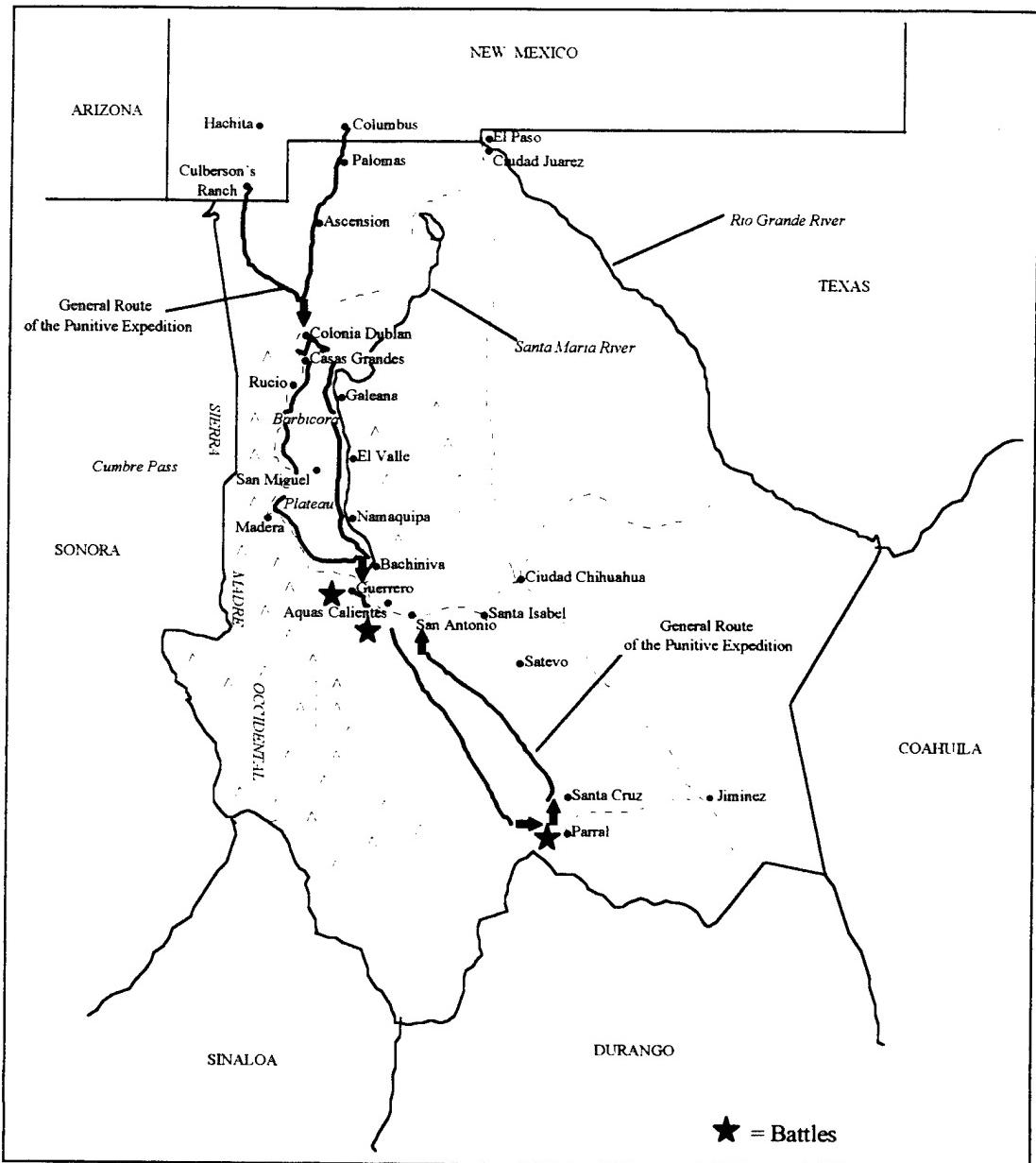


Figure 3. The Active Pursuit, 15 March-24 April 1916

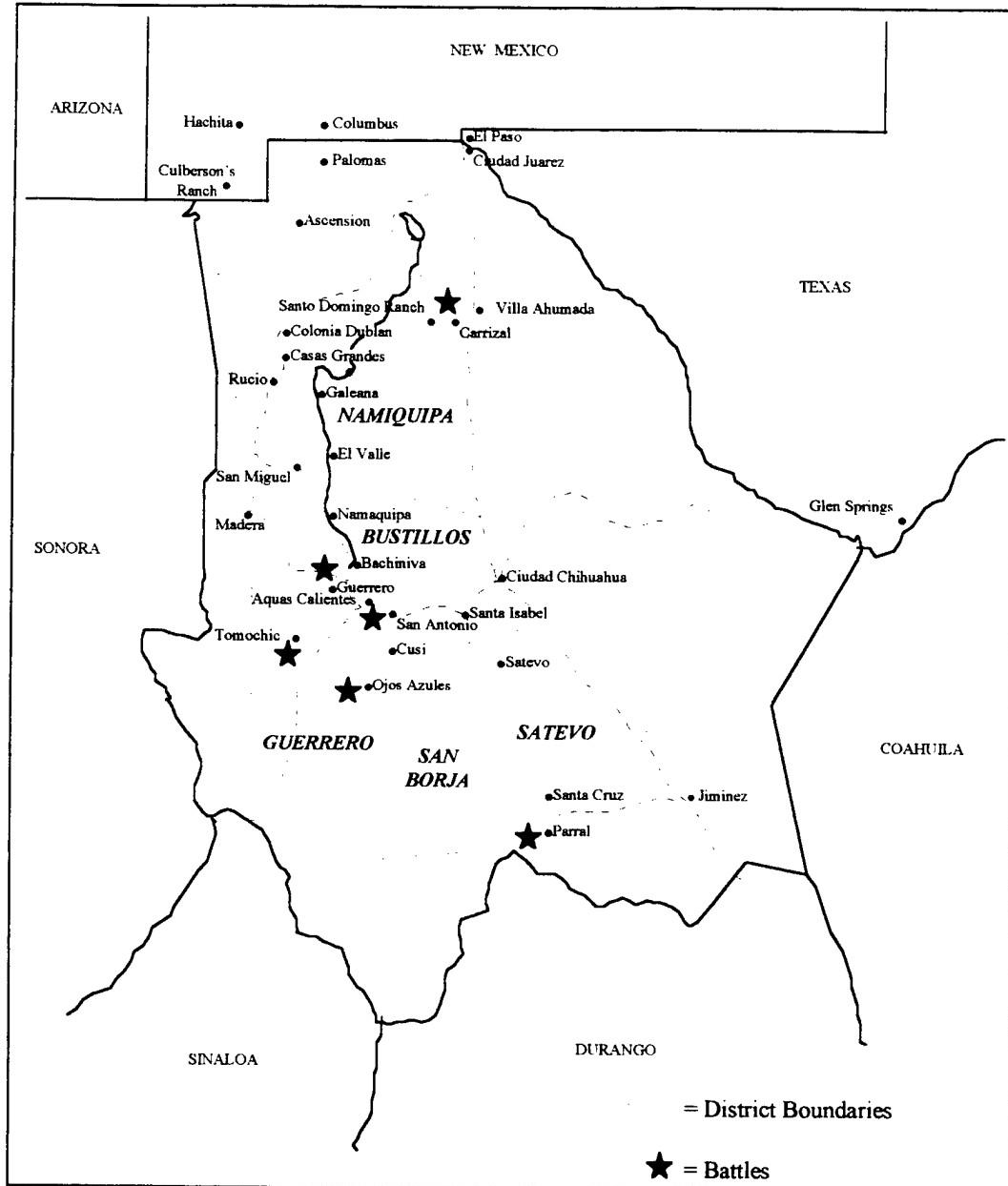


Figure 4. Policing the Districts

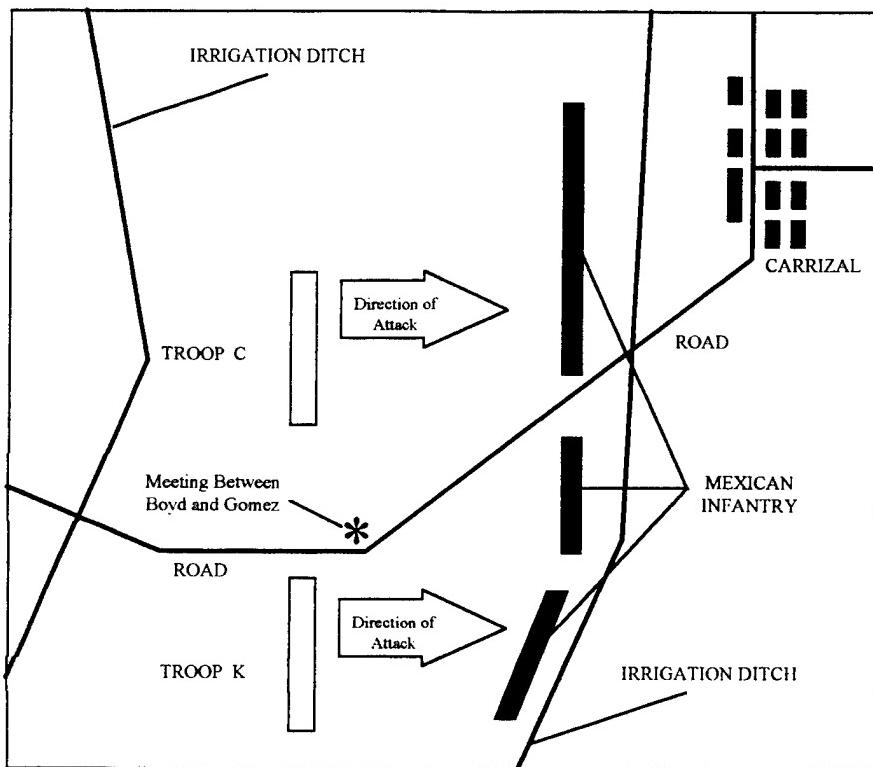


Figure 5. The Battle of Carrizal, 21 June 1916. Source: John S. D. Eisenhower, Intervention! (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1993), 296.

## APPENDIX A

### ORDER OF BATTLE, THE PUNITIVE EXPEDITION, 14 MARCH 1916

#### Headquarters, Punitive Expedition

Commander	Brigadier General John J. Pershing
Chief of Staff	Lieutenant Colonel DeRosey C. Cabell
Assistant to the Chief of Staff	Captain Wilson B. Burtt
Adjutant	Major John L. Hines
Intelligence Officer	Major James A. Ryan
Artillery Inspector	Colonel Lucien G. Berry
Judge Advocate	Captain Allen J. Greer
Quartermaster	Major John F. Madden
Surgeon	Major Jere B. Clayton
Engineer Officer	Major Lytle Brown
Signal Officer	Captain Hanson B. Black
Base Commander at Columbus	Major William R. Sample
Aide	1st Lieutenant James L. Collins
Aide	2nd Lieutenant Martin C. Shallenberger

#### 1st Provisional Cavalry Brigade

Commander	Colonel James Lockett
Troops:	11th Cavalry Regiment
	13th Cavalry Regiment
	Battery C, 6th Field Artillery

#### 2nd Provisional Cavalry Brigade

Commander	Colonel George H. Dodd
Troops:	7th Cavalry Regiment
	10th Cavalry Regiment
	Battery B, 6th Field Artillery

1st Provisional Infantry Brigade

Commander	Colonel John H. Beacon
Troops:	6th Infantry Regiment
	16th Infantry Regiment
	Companies E & H, 2nd Engineer Battalion
	Ambulance Company No. 7
	Field Hospital No. 7
	Wagon Companies No. 1 & 2
	Signal Corps Detachment
	1st Aero Squadron

Source: U.S. War Department, Report by Major General John J. Pershing, Commanding, of the Punitive Expedition, Colonia Dublan, Mexico, 10 October 1916, 5.

## APPENDIX B

### ORGANIZATION OF THE DISTRICTS, THE PUNITIVE EXPEDITION, 29 APRIL 1916

#### Namiquipa District

Commander: Major Elwood Evans, 10th Cavalry

District Boundary: Commencing at a point north of Alamo on the thirteenth parallel, thence east to the Mexican Central Railroad inclusive, south to Sauz, generally west through Tepehuanes, San Miguel, Madera to Tio Chico, north to the thirteenth parallel, thence east to Alamo.

#### Bustillos District

Commander: Colonel Herbert Slocum, 13th Cavalry

District Boundary: Commencing at San Miguel, thence along southern boundary of Namiquipa District to Sauz, south to near Salas, west to San Andres and San Antonio de los Arenales, and excluding both towns, thence southwest to Mal Paso, thence northward to Bachineva and San Miguel, including both towns.

#### Satevo District

Commander: Colonel Wilber Wilder, 5th Cavalry

District Boundary: Commencing at San Antonio de los Arenales, thence east through and including San Andres to Mapula, thence along the Mexican Central Railroad to Jiminez, Parral to Santa Barbara, thence northwesterly to San Lorenzo and to San Antonio de los Arenales.

San Borja District

Commander: Colonel James Lockett, 11th Cavalry

District Boundary: Commencing at San Antonio de los Arenales, southwest to San Lorenzo and Santa Barbara, west to Guachochic, north to Carichic, northwest to Rancho de Santiago, northwest to San Antonio de los Arenales.

Guerrero District

Commander: Colonel George Dodd, 7th Cavalry

District Boundary: Commencing at San Miguel, thence south through Bachiniva to Mal Paso, southwest to Rancho de Santiago, southeast to Carichic, south to Guachochic, west to the third meridian west of Chihuahua, north to a point west of Madera, thence east to Madera, thence southeast to San Miguel.

Source: U.S. War Department, Report by Major General John J. Pershing, Commanding, of the Punitive Expedition, Colonia Dublan, Mexico, 10 October 1916, 26.

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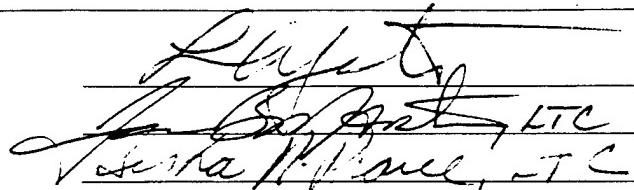
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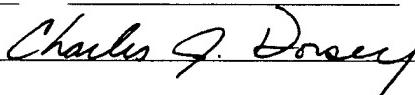
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